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REVERENCE, AND FAMILY DISCIPLINE.

TWO

SERMONS,

PREACHED AT PORTSMOUTH, N. H.

ON

The Day of the Annual Thanksgiving, November 25,

AND ON

The Sabbath following, November 28, 1841.

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PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

PORTSMOUTH :

J. W. FOSTER ; J. F. SHORES AND SON.

NOVEMBER, 1841.

These sermons, hastily prepared, and written without any view to publication, are published at the request of many who heard them, in the hope, that, so far as they may have influence, they may cherish that spirit of domestic discipline, subordination and piety, by which alone the rising generation can be trained to usefulness and honor in the community, and in the church of God.

C. W. BREWSTER, PRINTER.

Sch. R.

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nos. 348-364

SERMON I.

LEVITICUS XIX. 32.

"Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God."

OURS, it is to be feared, is an irreverent age and land. The number of those, who neither fear God nor regard man, is greatly multiplied. The whole providentially arranged system of things seems to be reversed; and, if there is any one motto, which might be inscribed on the surface of society as it now is, or as modern innovators and radicals would have it, it would be this, "The elder shall serve the younger." Youth no longer hangs upon the counsels of age and experience, or deigns to ask of the former times; but, the less one knows of the past, the surer and wiser guide for the future is he esteemed by many. Men often talk of the past, as if God had never worked, virtue never breathed, philanthropy never lifted a finger, and wisdom never given a true response, until now. We hear much concerning the *dead past*; and are bidden to let it *bury its dead*. Oh how soon, if our children are no wiser than ourselves, will they be talking the same unmeaning cant about our boasted present!

I by no means profess myself a conservative, in opposition to the true spirit of reform. I do not believe that God means that

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our race should remain stationary. But I feel equally sure that he does not mean that the race shall go backward ; and to pay no heed to the lessons of the past is to go backward,—it is to forfeit whatever good has been gained by those who have preceded us, and to incur the hazard of all their follies, mistakes and failures. Indeed, in point of fact, the boasted new truths of the present age resemble so nearly exploded errors of former times, that it demands the most acute spiritual discernment to tell them apart. Thus the last new philosophy is as old as Plato. The theological speculations of Chardon Street are the mere cast clothes of the Brethren and Sisters of the Free Spirit—a sect, which sprang into being in the *thirteenth*, and did not survive the *fifteenth* century. Those, who eat no pleasant bread, and abhor all manner of meat, are but reviving a moral code, under which the Jewish sect of the Essenes lived and perished. Those, who speak evil of dignities, despise governments, denounce law, and spurn at all the bulwarks of social order, are only renewing phantasies, which the early Quakers conceived, and then outgrew. Thus, where the past is unheeded, are men constantly stranding their vessels on the very rocks, against which there are multiplied wrecks and blazing beacon-fires to warn them.

But there is good in the past, as well as evil. And it is our appointed work to take that good, and make it better,—to start from the results that have been already reached, from the problems that have been wrought out, from the maxims and examples that have stood the test of time, and thus to go from knowledge to knowledge, and from strength to strength.

The same lack of reverence, that betrays itself with regard to the past considered abstractly, is widely manifest with regard to all persons both human and divine, that are commended to our reverence by age, station or character. Let us look into some of the more prominent tokens of this irreverent spirit, and then inquire into its source and its remedy.

First, does it not occur to you as an obvious illustration of this spirit, that, in every department of life, political, moral and religious, it is the young men that give law to the old? Formerly the rule was, that "days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom." But now it is young men's associations and conventions, that settle the affairs of the church and the nation, and dictate to the fathers what they shall believe, and say, and do. Men are now deemed too old to lead and govern at an age, when they used just to begin to be trusted; and there are not wanting in some of our states even legislative provisions, by which the legal tenure of public office ceases at an age, when a vigorous mind is still in its mellow prime, and has some of its best years yet to come.

Now youth and age, both have their virtues; and both have their respective parts to act in the economy of human progress. Youth has zeal, and age discretion,—youth courage, and age foresight,—youth vigor, and age skill. Age belongs at the helm, because it knows where is the safer path of the deep, and where are the sunken rocks; and, with prudence and experience at the helm, youth may, as is its wont, keep the vessel under full sail, without foundering, though not without now and then a fierce blow from an angry wave. But youth now seizes the helm, and steers straight for whatever port it would make, heedless of the breakers, which lie between, blind to the safer route by which they may be doubled. The consequences of this mode of management are rash experiments in every thing, plans that explode before they are matured, laws that repeal themselves as soon as they are enacted, the perpetual tampering with prescription and vested right, the spirit of reckless change, for the mere sake of change. All these things are to be laid to the charge either of the actually young, or of those, who cultivate boyishness of character, and prefer a *green* to a *ripe* old age.

This same irreverent spirit we may trace in the light, in which laws and rulers are now regarded. How fast, within the memory of most of us, has respect for law declined ! Every man throws himself back upon his right of rebellion, and, the moment a statute touches one's own case, he makes a merit of defying it, and claims to be regarded as a martyr to principle. All over the land, mobs have taken the law into their own hands, and, so far from being frowned upon by an indignant public, they are generally praised and flattered for committing no greater amount of arson, robbery or murder, than they set out to commit. The only way, in which you can now have the laws executed, (except those against petty thieves and the less genteel class of robbers and swindlers,) is to make them so loose and indefinite, that they cannot be easily broken.

Disrespect for those in authority is probably more prevalent among us, than in any other nation upon earth. The reviling of rulers, contemptuous words of the powers that be, how large a space have they for years filled in the speech of men and in the public press ! An intelligent foreigner would be amply justified in inferring from our political newspapers, that there is not now, and has not been in our government for the last dozen years a man high in office, who does not merit a life-residence in the penitentiary. And yet, among the men thus defamed, there have not been wanting the rigidly conscientious, high-minded, philanthropic and God-fearing. We leave our public functionaries no room for independent action. We say, when we vote for them, that they are men, who deserve to be trusted in all things ; but yet we bind them hand and foot with pledges and instructions. So long as they remain bound, and suffer themselves to be our mere echoes, we are satisfied ; but, the moment one of them exercises the discretion appertaining to his office, *he is a traitor, and worse,—what right has he to think or act for himself ? Have not those, who put him in power, decided all these matters for*

him? Our treatment of our public men has often reminded me of the Chinese mariner, who carries in the stern of his vessel an idol, to which he burns perfumed paper and incense while the wind is propitious, but when he is becalmed, or a contrary wind sets in, he beats his idol with many stripes. Just so, we deify our great men and burn incense to them, while they let us think for them; but account them worthy of stripes, so soon as they betray the slightest symptom of independent thought.

Is it said, that these things are the natural growth of republican institutions? If I thought them so, I would say,—Perish the very name of a republic! But the true republican spirit seems to me to be the very opposite of all this. I can conceive under a monarchy of an abounding spirit of contempt for laws, which the people do not make, and for rulers, who hold their places, merely because their remote ancestors were great men. But, in a republic, who is it that make the laws? The people themselves,—the very people that set them at nought. The laws are the expressed will of the majority, who, on matters that demand law, have an inherent right too obvious to be demonstrated, to fix the law,—of the majority, whose decision, though not necessarily sound and just, is the most probable approximation to absolute right, which a people can make,—of the majority, whose sentiment is not without majesty, and challenges respect and deference where it cannot command assent. It is the undoubted right of a minority to strive for the mastery, if it strive lawfully; for numbers cannot overawe individual opinion, and men cannot but desire to see their own sentiments prevail. But it is the duty of a minority to confess itself fallible, to reverence as an offset to its own judgment the voices of the greater number, and to submit and obey in meekness, until the power that enacted repeals.

So with regard to our public functionaries, there is every reason why a republic, that respects itself, should reverence its

rulers. We have the most inordinate national vanity ; and yet, in vilifying our rulers, what do we, but virtually acknowledge the deep depravity of our people at large ? For only the vile can elevate the vile to high places of trust and authority. If we have been and are governed by selfish, knavish and unprincipled men, it must be because we are a selfish, knavish and unprincipled nation. But, if we have any faith in the integrity of the people, we ought to show reverence to the man of their choice, or, at least, to respect the office as the seat of the people's sovereignty, and, from respect for the office, to shield its incumbent from insult and abuse. The public measures of public men are indeed the fair subject of criticism ; but might they not be thoroughly canvassed in a respectful tone, in a candid and conciliatory spirit, and without any admixture of wanton personality and coarse vituperation ? Do not men, who have not assumed their places, or grown into them, but who have been elevated to them by the voice of the people, proffer a fair claim to whatever of respectful treatment, candid construction, and reverential deference is due to the great body of their constituents ?

In a republic, the spirit of reverence for law, and for those, who make and administer it, is barely the extension of a just self-respect. And it is the only safeguard of popular institutions. It takes the place of an inquisitorial police, of standing armies, and of the pomp and circumstance of courts. It stands in the stead of force, which in a republic can never be employed beyond a certain point. It is the only thing, that can procure the keeping of the laws or obedience to rulers, and thus the only thing, that can preserve our nation from utter anarchy. In this quarter our great danger lies ; and it will take but a few years more of such irreverence for law and its functionaries, as has of late been rife through the land, to make all the lovers of order and just subordination weary of republicanism, and ready to welcome some more concentrated and absolute form of government,

which might at least compel awe, if it could not elicit reverence.

We discern this same irreverent spirit in many of the *theological* tendencies of the day. How fertile in novelties and vagaries has been the religious history of the last few years, or, I might almost say, months! We know not how to analyze or class the multitude of vague and wild theories and speculations, which deluded men and unsexed women have broached and advocated, in conventicles and through the press, in village, town and city. But they all bear close kindred in one point. They all take their start from this abounding spirit of irreverence, from a contempt for the traditional and authoritative, from an unwillingness to receive law even from the All-wise, and the determination of each to be a law to himself. They are as various as the minds which promulgate them, because each of these minds shuts out the great central light of the moral universe, and follows the twinkling of its own tiny star. "Ye shall be as gods," were the ensnaring words of the tempter to our first parents; and never were these words whispered with so flattering an unction, and into so many ears, as at the present day. Even school boys and young maidens have caught the whisper, and, before they are men and women grown, they prate about the sufficiency of their own souls and their own inspirations, and their inability to take on trust even those teachings, which have the manifest seal of God. Misguided parents too babble to their children lessons of self-obedience and arrogant self-reliance, and laugh as obsolete at what once was the law for the young spirit, "Fear God, and keep his commandments."

That this state of things can be permanent, I by no means believe. But the end is not yet. I greatly fear, that these godless vagaries cannot pass away without such shocking developments of licentiousness and guilt, as have been the issue of similar movements in former times. The risen generation of self-wor-

shippers may abide by the habits of old-fashioned morality, which they learned under better auspices. But those, whose characters shall be formed under such maxims as, *Obey your impulses,—Follow your instincts,—Believe no teacher,—Trust no written or traditional law*, will show, it is to be feared, in unbridled and shameless profligacy, how well able man is to direct his steps without the law and the spirit of Jesus. I hesitate not to say, that the analogy of all ecclesiastical history renders it as certain, as the experience of the past can render any thing in the future certain, that this boasted new light, this reformed theology, this christianity without Christ, this religion without reverence, faith or prayer, will ere long betray its true spirit and tendency in such open, avowed and gross practical immorality, as will make its disciples subjects, not for formal argument, but for the severest animadversion of law and justice. In proof of this tendency, it may not be out of place to remark, that, even by men and women of pure and virtuous lives, who are involved in these speculations, the sanctity and permanence of the marriage covenant are already called in question, and public morals thus attacked at one of those avenues, where the surest death-blow might be aimed.

Such are some of the symptoms of a spirit of irreverence abroad in our land. And where does it have its origin? It springs, as seems to me, from small beginnings. It takes its rise, to a great degree, in the bosom of families, and has its source in the decline of domestic discipline and subordination. Children are absolved from the law of their parents, and are thus made the enemies of all law. It seems to me, that, even within my remembrance, (and many of you can double the years over which this extends,) there has been in this respect a very great change for the worse. The commandment used to be taught, “Honor thy father and thy mother,” and “Children, obey your parents in the Lord.” But now, from what I frequently witness of the mutual relation of children and parents, I should almost

imagine that it had been written, "Honor thy son and thy daughter," and, "Parents, obey your children." If, in these days of irreverence, there is any thing that is treated with universal reverence, it is the wayward impulses and whims of children. And often have I seen parents of large and well informed minds, wise and judicious, instead of moulding their children's characters, submitting themselves to be moulded by them, brow-beaten out of sound opinions, driven from respectable and worthy habits, and drawn where neither good sense nor conscience would go with them. There are many other parents, who know not enough of their children to be influenced by them, who let their children grow up without restraint or guidance, who know not where or how they spend their time, who never lay upon them a command, or ask an account of their employments, their habits or their progress, who give them no opportunity to cultivate the virtues of filial trust, submission and obedience. It is children thus trained, or rather, thus untrained, who, when they grow up, push their elders aside. It is such, that despise laws, and speak evil of dignities. It is such, that spurn the yoke and burden of the Saviour, and walk by their own light and their own law.

The best discipline for church and state is that of the well ordered family. The child in such a family learns to obey and to trust, is made to feel the imperfection of his knowledge and the limits of his rights, is taught the lesson of reverence and of faith. It is the wise appointment of God, that in every human household there should be a miniature of his own moral government, that thus, in the lesser families of earth, each individual should be trained to take his true place, and to move in his just orbit in his own great spiritual family. The child in a good family takes many things on his father's word, obeys even where he cannot understand, and learns by obedience,—acquires, by acquiescence in what his father bids him do, the experimental knowledge of truth and duty. He gets the habit of conforming

his own will to a higher will, of distrusting his own unaided judgment, of referring to an authoritative standard of appeal, of believing that there is wisdom higher than his own, and a law above him. Having thus learned to render honor where honor is due, obedience where it belongs, faith where there is a basis for it, he is prepared by this invaluable pupilage to be a good citizen and a good Christian, to obey the laws, to respect the powers that be, to humble himself as a little child at the feet of Jesus, and to bow in conscious ignorance and weakness before the Ancient of days. It is not children thus trained and disciplined, that lead and encourage mobs, that take their seats in disorganizing and anti-Christian conventions, that boast of their own godlike wisdom and sanctity, and despise their neighbours.

I have not time to follow out this subject as I gladly would, and as I perhaps may on some future occasion. But I wish to leave with you, parents, this idea, that it is only as you maintain a just and careful discipline and government in your families, as you keep your children *children*, and make them actually obey you, trust you and be subject to you, that you can hope to see them filling the places which you desire for them, as sober, peaceful, worthy citizens, as the friends of law and order, as devout and dutiful followers of Christ, as members of the church of the living God. Those of you, who let your children manage and govern themselves, and leave them to the law of their own freaks and impulses, may indeed see much, that will seem to you to be elements of early promise, that is, you will see a bold, fearless, defiant spirit, a promptness and energy of action, a strength of resolve, a nervous intenseness of will and purpose; but, if you live long enough, you will see that strength given to evil, that energy wasted against what is right and true, and those giant elements of character, (for such in your fondness you deem them to be,) growing into harsh, knotty, distorted, self-willed, obstinate spirits, void alike of respect for man and the fear of God.

The remedy then for the evils, of which I have spoken, is in Christian homes. They are the true bulwark of the church and the state. They are the model of what the church and the state will be. The little must shape the great. What the church and the state are going to be for the next generation, the families now growing up must decide; and on you, parents, rests a fearful portion of the responsibility of this decision.

We are reminded both by our subject, and by the occasion which has brought us together, of the stern old Puritans, who instituted this festival. They had many faults,—the faults of their times. But they had, and they dearly cherished the spirit of reverence in all its legitimate forms. To them the family was its sacred nursery. There, by a discipline, sometimes perhaps needlessly severe, yet equal, impartial, and pervaded by the spirit of piety, they formed good citizens and good Christians. From the homes of those mighty, holy men, was transmitted that spirit of subordination, that habit of obedience, which alone kept our people from anarchy and civil bloodshed in our revolutionary times, and in the unsettled posture of affairs, that ensued upon our national independence. I would not invite back to earth every individual feature of the Pilgrim and the Puritan character. Much of it has well perished with the times, that gave it birth. But I would, that, with this glad festival, they had left us more of the reverent and devout soul, that breathed, not only on their solemn feast-days, but in their whole lives. Would to God, that there were in all our households that earnest, deep spirit of domestic piety, which hallowed their rude homes, and made them like the tents of the old patriarchs, where the angel of Jehovah's presence talked at the door, and sat at the table. With this day's ascriptions of gratitude around our domestic altars, let the vow go up from every parent's heart, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

SERMON II.

GENESIS XVIII. 19.

“He will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.”

IN my sermon on Thursday, I referred to deficient family discipline, as one chief cause of much that is to be lamented in the present aspects of society. I intend now to pursue this subject, though it is one, on which my own comparative inexperience admonishes me to speak with unfeigned diffidence. But, having witnessed, as I think, much negligence and error on this point, among those whom I sincerely respect and love, and whom it is my province to warn of duty and of danger, I cannot conscientiously remain silent. I therefore ask your attention to what seem to me some of the chief deficiencies in the domestic management of children.

1. Is there not on the part of many a lack of watchfulness over their children? Your children are too much out of your sight. You know not where they are, or with whom, or how employed. They are with you at table, and hardly anywhere else. You are not acquainted with them. You think them indeed too good children to need watching, and feel willing to trust them anywhere. You never see any thing amiss in them. They sleep quietly, they behave decently at table; and you have not the slightest doubt that they are equally quiet and orderly through the day, and everywhere, forgetting that the times when you

see them, are times, when the worst child could hardly show ill temper or bad principle. Perhaps some unfavourable account of your children's characters occasionally reaches your ears; but you close your ears against it,—you are sure that it must be a mistake or a falsehood,—your children never said or did before you what they are reported to have said or done elsewhere, and you cannot conceive of their manifesting, when opportunity or temptation presents itself, any traits of character, which they do not exhibit during the few quiet, untempted moments of the day, for which you are with them. Thus do some of you know much less of your children's characters, than your friends and acquaintance do.

Some of you, fathers, say that you have no time to attend to your children. Yet you feel yourselves acquitted of all blame towards them; for it is on their account, not on your own, that you spend so many hours of the day in business, and deprive yourselves to so great a degree of the leisure and the enjoyment of home. You are laying up money for your children,—you cannot hope to leave them rich without devoting your whole time and energy to business,—you therefore have no leisure to bestow upon their intellectual and moral culture,—that is, in plain speech, you believe that the property, which you can bequeath to your children, will be of more value than the characters, which you might help them form. Most heartily do I pity the children of parents, who thus prefer for them riches that perish with the using, to the enduring treasures of mind and heart.

But, parents, whether it be your engagedness in other things, or a feeling of security with regard to your children, that has suspended your watchfulness over them, let me urge you by no means to take it for granted that they are all that you would have them. You ought to keep them, as it were, perpetually under your eye. You ought to know where and how they spend their time out of school, who are their playmates, in what kind of groups they are to be found, whether among the profane, bois-

terous and vulgar, or among children of blameless habits and character. Their evenings should all be passed under your own roof, or under some roof, where you know that they are under none but good influences, and, if they desire happier evenings than they can spend at home, it is your fault, that their homes are not made pleasant and attractive.—While you keep your children thus beneath your own inspection, beware of that blinding partiality, which so often accompanies love. Let your affection rather assume the form of earnest solicitude, of unslumbering vigilance. How anxiously does a mother watch, almost from moment to moment, the constitution of a feeble infant, that she may meet with appropriate remedies every unfavorable symptom, the moment it becomes obvious, and may make haste to cherish every sign of health and promise ! No less frail, no less dependant on incessant nursing, on the warding off of the first shadow of evil, on the prompt fostering of every good and happy symptom, is the mental and moral character of your child. You know not what of good or evil a single day may bring forth. You are mistaken in imagining that your children's characters are fixed. They are ductile to an inconceivable degree. They are as clay in the hands of the potter. Be careful then, into what potter's hands they fall. Be perpetually on your guard ; and see that you take the means of knowing concerning them all that a finite being can know.

2. Another prevalent fault of parents is their scepticism with regard to the influence of moral causes upon their children. How often have I heard parents talk, as if they thought that God's laws were suspended in behalf of their own children, so that they might pass unsinged through a fiery furnace, in which any other child would be sadly burned ! The language employed with regard to any particular exposure or evil influence is : " I know very well that it is what many children would not bear,—

what would be of bad example and influence to almost any boy we know ; but our child has always been so good, and has so amiable and virtuous a disposition, that it is impossible for him to get any harm." But, in talking thus, you are pronouncing your children exempt from a law of God, which is as unchanging as the heavens,—*Evil communications corrupt good manners and morals.* No character can entirely withstand the moral influences, to which it is subjected. True, there may be a greater or less degree of yielding on the part of different individuals. Some may oppose a strong, others a feeble resistance. Some, by the mightiest effort, by such effort as not one *child* in a thousand has strength enough to put forth, may keep what good there is in them in the midst of evil examples and influences ; but even then, they lose the benefit of the good example and influence, to which they might all the while have been subjected. You might range the town without finding a single child, who would not be made positively worse, would not have his finer feelings blunted, his moral sense dulled and hardened, by being several hours a day in the company, or under the control of persons of harsh and coarse manners, ungovernable temper, violent and profane speech, and immoral life. Yet many of you, parents, have acted on a different idea, and have been willing to subject your children to influences of this kind, against which I do not believe that your own moral feelings would have stood proof, I am sure that mine would not. But you have supposed your children endowed with superhuman strength of principle ; or else you have expected God to work a miracle in their behalf, and, indeed, had not the age of miracles passed away, I know of no miracle, for which a benevolent mind might pray more earnestly, than for one to protect a child in the furnace of fearful moral exposure, into which a parent's hand had cast him. I mean that these remarks shall apply, not to one thing, but to many things,—to your carelessness in the choice of teachers for your children, or your indifference to the characters

of those, whom others choose for you,—to your heedlessness as to the company, which your children frequent,—to the questionable amusements, in which you indulge them,—to the degree to which, in times of political excitement, you seek to inflame their passions into sympathy with the turbid state of the community,—to the employments connected with modes of immoral agency, in which you sometimes place them, when they are old enough to be thus provided for. In all these ways have many of you wantonly exposed your children, often with full knowledge of the circumstances of danger, but with the feeling, grounded on nothing in your child's real character, but on your own parental blindness, that your child was too good to be injured by anything of the kind.

But, admitting for the sake of argument that your child is too good to be contaminated by bad example and evil associations, I would ask, Is he too good to be made better? If not, might he not be continually growing better, if, in his school, among his companions, in his play-hours, in his employment, he were surrounded by positively good influences? His home influences, we will admit, are good. His father's and his mother's law and life are adapted to cherish in him the best principles and habits. But how much of the time is he with you? At the most *four* or *five*, perhaps not more than *one* or *two*, of his *fifteen* or *sixteen* waking hours,—not so long as he is at school, not so long, in many instances, as he is at play. And can you expect, according to any known system of moral laws, that the good influence of the *few* hours will neutralize doubtful or bad influences during the *many*? The point, to which I wish to bring you, is, that you should not regard your children as exempts from God's universal moral law. I want you to judge of them, not as *your* children, but as *children*, liable to suffer from all the sources of evil, and capable of benefit from all the sources of good, from which other children can get evil or good.

3. Another deficiency is in the standard of character, which many parents establish for their children. You do not set a sufficiently high standard for them. You desire and expect from them too little of moral goodness, of simplicity and gentleness, of conscientiousness and early piety. Nay, some of you desire and cherish in your children traits contrary to these. I have known a father, himself a very worthy man and excellent citizen, to speak with high approbation of his son, because he promptly revenged some trivial insult from another boy by stout and cruel blows, saying, "That is the kind of spirit I want my boys to show." Surely this father had never thought of the spirit and temper of him, who returned not evil for evil, as something to be desired and sought for his children. He had for them an ideal of character, which was entirely opposed to the Christian ideal. Nor do I think that it is very uncommon for parents to try to make their children irascible and vindictive, (they call it *spirited*,) and to give them maxims of conduct utterly averse from those of the New Testament. Nor is it rare for parents to cherish selfishness in their children,—to give them ungenerous maxims of conduct, to train them in ungenerous habits, and to do all that they can to infuse into them in early life a mean and miserly spirit. This a parent, who regards money-making as the chief end of man, will almost always do.

But, if you are not conscious of wishing to bring your children under the power of absolutely evil principles, are not some of you conscious of setting your aims for your children very low,—not low as to their worldly success, but morally and religiously low? You are satisfied that many rough traits, especially in a boy's character, should grow unchecked; that certain border vices, for which you can find virtuous names, should be cultivated; that many of the lesser graces of character should be entirely wanting. You are satisfied, if your son shows good capacities for business, and grows up free from such vices, as bring with

them idleness, poverty and loss of caste. You are satisfied for your daughter, if she has gone through the routine of a school education, has good manners, and is prepared to appear to advantage in society. You are content that your sons should be self-willed, ungentle, self-indulgent to a certain point,—that they should grow up with little or no reverence for sacred times or things, and without religious principles or habits. You are content, that your daughters should be idle, frivolous and selfish, and that they too should remain unconscious of their duties to God, and of the powers of the world to come. You coincide with your children in the tacit feeling, that religion is not for the young, but for those of riper years. You have thought but little of their growing up to be the disciples of Jesus, and “followers of God as dear children.” Your desires for them have seldom assumed the form of prayer. This lowness of aim has kept out of your sight the surest of all helps in their education, and is forming their characters destitute of the crowning grace of character. Unless you seek first for your children the kingdom of God and his righteousness, you cannot calculate on their having strength to resist temptation of any kind, or to hold fast their integrity and purity when assailed. For want of the only sufficient anchor to their souls, they may be swept away by the current of appetite and passion. For want of an interest in things heavenly, they may make utter shipwreck of things earthly.

Think not that I am speaking of anything chimerical or unattainable, when I urge you to expect for your children something more, and to seek for them something higher and better, than you do. There is no reason, why your children should not become religious, as well as successful and accomplished men and women. Indeed the moral capacities are much more equally distributed, than the intellectual and the active. There is not a boy or girl in your families, whom, with God’s blessing, you may not train up to be a devout disciple of Jesus, a lover of every good word

and work, an eminently useful and beloved member of society. But, (though it be only to repeat in another form what has been already said,) let me, parents, put the question home to your hearts,—Are you conscious of sincerely and earnestly desiring these divine and inestimable benefits for your children? Have you, father, said to yourself concerning your son, “I would that the eye that sees him should bless him, and the ear that hears him bear witness to him, that he should be as eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, and a father to the poor, that he should walk among men in the beauty of a meek and forgiving temper, and a holy life, and that, when he dies, the ways of Zion should mourn?” Have you, mother, craved for your daughter, that her chief praise should be in the dwellings of the poor, her first delight in the service of her Master, her chosen study the book of eternal life? If not, let the paramount worth of these Christian graces be now brought home with power to your minds. Remember that they are graces, in which the young spirit may be clothed; that they may be the infant’s first robe, worn so early that he shall know no other; that they are the more difficult of acquisition, the longer they are delayed; that, while God casts away no sincere penitent, he has said with peculiar emphasis, “They that seek me early shall find me.” Bring before your minds that judgment of God, which you cannot escape, when for this parental trust you must render strict account to Him, who bestowed it. What will be the questions, which you must then answer? Not, “Didst thou make thy son a successful servant of Mammon,—didst thou fit thy daughter to be admired, caressed and flattered among the gay and thoughtless”? But, “Didst thou teach thy son and thy daughter My statutes and My judgments, and place their young footsteps upon My paths? Didst thou open their hearts to My love? Didst thou bring them to Jesus, and invoke for them his blessing and his spirit”?

4. Another error, into which, it seems to me, some careful and conscientious parents fall, is, that they make their children, too early and to too great a degree, their own masters. The habit of deciding for one's self and taking care of one's self is often spoken of, as of prime value to children. To my mind it seems of much more consequence that right decisions be made for them, and that good care be taken of them. If they become in any way the victims of folly, I know not what relief or remedy there can be in the fact, that they fell by *their own* folly. A single wrong decision may be of infinite and irreparable injury to them, —is it not then better that the power of deciding for them remain where it is most likely to be used with discretion? But, you ask, is it not well to accustom children early to the habit of self-decision? I reply that self-decision is less a habit, than a necessity. He, who ceases to have any one to decide for him, must in the very nature of things decide for himself. The habit, which you want to form in your children, is not that of *self*-decision, but of *right* decision; and your best guarantee for their making right decisions, when they must needs decide for themselves, is in their having the example of an unbroken series of wise and sound decisions, which you shall have made for them. So too, when your children leave home, or attain a mature age, they must needs take care of themselves; and they will be best fitted to do this discreetly and safely, by the example of the minute watchfulness, high principle and Christian fidelity, with which they were cared for through the whole of childhood and youth.

But, you say, one needs to be early cast upon his own resources, and upon his power of prompt, bold, independent decision and action, in order to push his way among the crowd, when he goes forth into busy life. I reply, that there is already too much of this pushing and striving,—there are too many masters, too many, who lean solely and rashly on their own understandings, who seek their own good to the detriment of others, who are entirely

destitute of the principle and habit of obedience and subordination, whether towards God or man. If it is among such as these that you desire your child to urge his way into active life, the sooner you emancipate him from the yoke of filial restraint and obedience, the better. I grant too that those, whose characters are of this stamp, start foremost in the race for preferment and for gain ; but they stumble midway in their career, and those, who started far behind them, pass by them, and leave them in the distance. The true discipline for life is not that, which cherishes a spirit of wanton, factious independence, but that, which teaches respect, obedience, submission, deference to the rights and claims of others, humility and meekness. The spirit of arrogant self-reliance which is abroad, and in which some good people take great pains to train their children, is fast upheaving the foundations of society, which can be laid again in strength and beauty, only by a generation, that shall have thoroughly learned to yield, submit and obey. It is easier to command, than to serve,—to dictate, than to yield,—to govern, than to be governed,—to defy law, than to be a quiet, conscientious, faithful citizen ; and for these more difficult, more necessary, more imperative duties, the discipline of obedience and submission during the years of childhood and youth is the best, the only sure preparation.

By filial submission and obedience during the whole of their early lives, your children will also be best prepared for the lifelong and the eternal service of God. The child, who has lived in submission to earthly parents, will know how to obey his Father in heaven. But he, who is too early emancipated from the law of his father and his mother, will make haste to free himself from the law of God. The principle, that operates in both relations, is one and the same. Obedience is a pious,—self-reliance an ungodly spirit. The child, that has learned to submit and obey, has acquired that, which is the habit of the redeemed in heaven, no less than of the good on earth ; and has therefore, on that one

point at least, a spirit in union and harmony with that of heaven. He, on the other hand, who is left too early to the counsel of his own will, so far as that circumstance affects his permanent character, prepares himself to be a rebel, and therefore an outcast spirit in the world to come.

5. Another lamentable deficiency in the influences, to which many of our children are subjected, is the lack of all the institutions of domestic piety. Are there not many of your families, where there is no domestic altar, no form of worship or of religious recognition, no stated time for religious instruction? Are there not here many children, who have never heard the voice of prayer at their homes, except from their pastor, at some season of sickness or death,—many, who have never received from their parents, (or at least not since mere infancy,) a word of expressly religious counsel or warning? May we not trace to this domestic negligence the irreverent and indocile deportment and conduct of some, on the Sabbath, when under the care of their Sabbath teachers? I can hardly believe, that the utter indifference to religious truth, and the entire callousness of the young soul to the emotions of reverence and devotion, which have in some instances come to my knowledge, could have grown up in the hearts of children, who had daily accompanied their parents to the throne of mercy,—with whom piety had received its consecration from a father's prayers, and the bible from the daily and reverent use of it in the family devotions. But I can easily conceive that themes, which the parent passes by, and never in any form recognizes at home, and which are urged upon the child only by a teacher whom he sees but once a week, should seem to him void of all reality, authority or worth, tedious, irksome and unmeaning. The child in such a case is guilty; but the parent is so to a hundredfold degree. You must remember, parents, that to a child, especially to an affectionate child, (such

as you either believe or desire yours to be,) the highest and surest consecration is that of a father's or a mother's example. The family altar has been for the salvation of multitudes, and has been for the rising again of many fallen. Of how many confessions of penitent and restored prodigals has this sentence formed a part,—“I thought of the mention daily made of me in the morning and evening prayer at home!”

Let me strongly urge upon you this duty, both for your children's sakes and for your own. How appropriate, how beautiful the service! How natural, if there be a God, that they, whom he makes to dwell in families, and unites by common blessings, should together acknowledge and implore those blessings! How fitting, that, in a family of the frail and the dying, who yet would gladly believe that their love for each other cannot die, they should together own the redeeming mercy of him, in whom, though dead, they yet may live, of him, through whom alone they can be one family forever! How obviously necessary is it to a sense of religious restraint and obligation in the young and volatile, that these momentous subjects should be daily brought home to their minds, revived by repetition, and made to take a deep hold upon their hearts by the constantly recurring solemnity of the hour of prayer! The service need not be long, or complex, or such as to tax the mind of him who leads it; nor need it even be in his own words. Nay, it ought to be simple and brief, that it may be wearisome to none; and the language of an appropriate form is often preferable to the timid and difficult flow of speech of one, who has not devotional language readily at his command. Only let the service be solemn and heartfelt. Let it not be, and therefore let it never seem, a *mere* form, but always a fresh, sincere and fervent service; and it can hardly be, that your whole family will not imbibe the spirit of reverence and prayer, so that the chain let down from heaven will bind each with all, and all with God.

Do you feel, that you are not religious enough to conduct such a service? For this very reason I would have you engage in it, and use it as a means of religion, as a pledge of your progress heavenward, as an instrument for daily strengthening good principles, and for keeping down and extirpating wrong traits of character. Or do you imagine that there is anything in your mode of life, your habits, your business, on which the spirit of your daily prayer would frown? Pray then, in order that you may concentrate the Almighty's frown where you know that it rests, and that His felt frown may drive you from every habit, association or indulgence, on which you cannot implore His blessing. Or, although you own the obligation of this duty, have you so long neglected it, that you find it hard to begin? Will you not find it yet harder to account to your Maker for protracted delay in the discharge of an acknowledged duty? Is not that a false shame, which leads you to postpone doing right? If any of you own the weight of this obligation, and yet have been hindered by such feelings from the performance of a service so appropriate and beautiful, why may not this very day, when you and your families are reminded together of the duty, be the best time for breaking over the restraints of diffidence, and establishing the family altar? Your children will rise up and call you blessed for it. You will command by it the smile of God upon those whom you best love, and his spirit of holy counsel upon yourselves in your arduous and momentous duties. And, when the earthly house shall be dissolved, you may hope with confidence to appear at the right hand of the Judge, with the unbroken circle of those, whom you will have daily borne to your God and Saviour in the arms of faith, into whose young hearts you will have breathed the spirit of prayer and praise.

6. But, finally, you will in vain seek to remedy all other deficiencies, where you leave anything wanting in parental exam-

ple. Vain will be your prayers and teachings, vain your careful discipline and rigid watchfulness, if you point one way and walk another. If you are selfish and worldly, if you are petulant and vindictive, if you in any respect depart widely from the gospel standard of character, your children will mark the deviation, and will be far more likely to *follow* you, than to *obey* you. But adorn the religion of Jesus by a life in all respects conformed to it ; let your walk in your household and before the world be pervaded by a spirit of piety towards God, of love to man, of justice and candor, meekness and truth ; and you can hardly fail to be obeyed, when you “command your children and your household after you to keep the way of the Lord.”

I have thus, my friends, with great plainness of speech, placed before you some of the more prevalent deficiencies in domestic discipline, influence and example. Accept these hints as a pledge of my sincere and affectionate wishes for your own, and your children's highest good. Let me leave with you in conclusion David's resolutions concerning the ordering of his house, as embracing principles essential to the well-being of every Christian family. “I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes. I hate the work of them that turn aside ; it shall not cleave to me. A froward heart shall depart from me ; I will not know a wicked person. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house ; he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me ; he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.”

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THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY:

A

SERMON

BY THE

RIGHT REV. JAMES HERVEY OTEY, D. D. LL.D.,
BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF TENNESSEE.

EDITED (BY REQUEST)

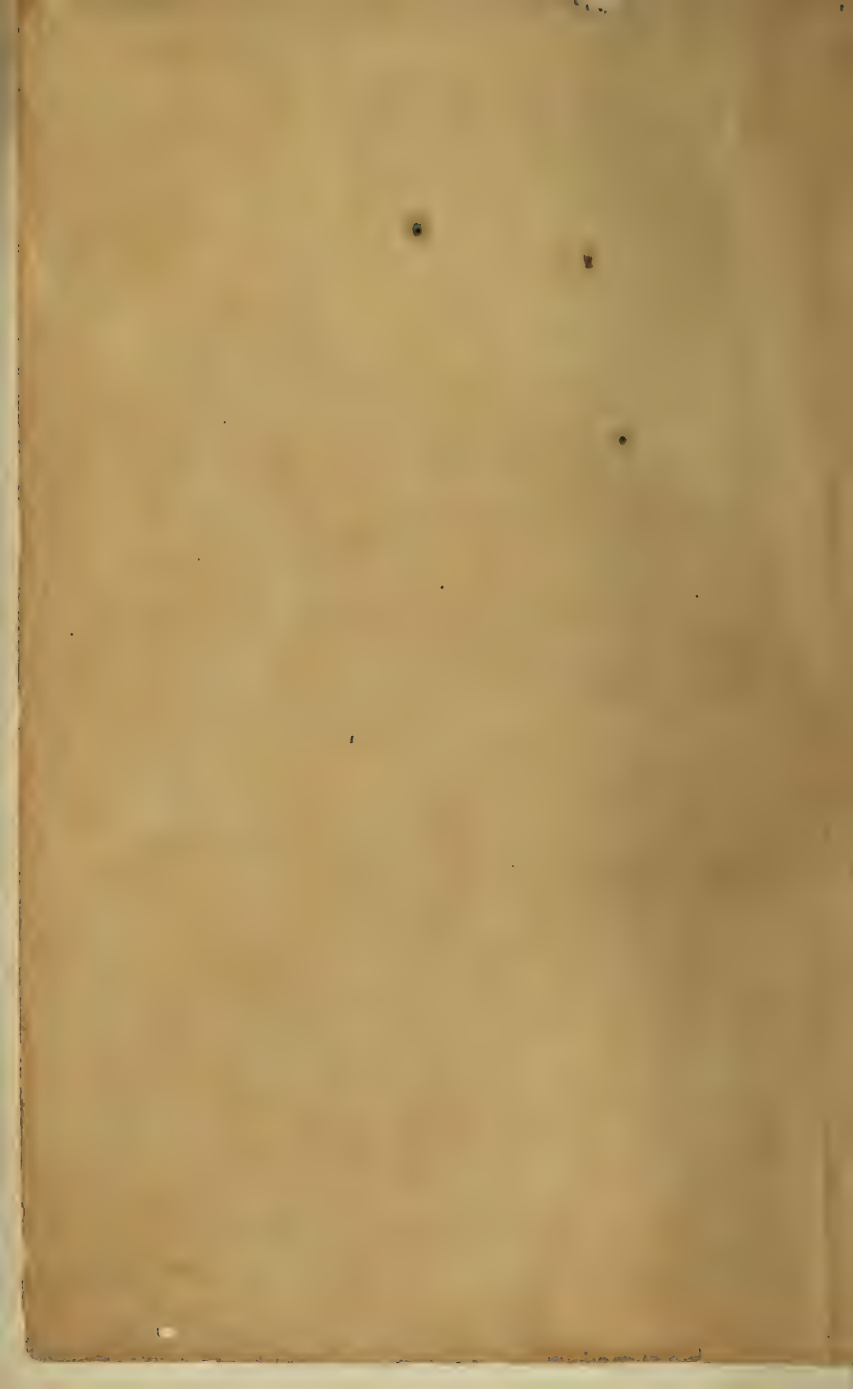
BY WILLIAM A. DOD, D. D.

P23038

NEW YORK:

DANIEL DANA, JR., 381 BROADWAY.

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Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1860,
BY DANIEL DANA, JR.,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern
District of New York.

NEW YORK :
BILLIN AND BROTHER, PRINTERS,
XX, NORTH WILLIAM ST

7/10/30
Flowers Collection

TO THE RIGHT REV. W. H. ODENHEIMER, D. D.

Right Rev. and Dear Sir.

I THANKFULLY undertake the service you so kindly transfer to me, of conducting through the press the manuscript Discourse of the Bishop of Tennessee on the subject of the Christian Ministry. I esteem myself happy in the opportunity of contributing, in any degree, towards the dissemination of truth so important as that which forms the subject of this admirable Discourse. What can be of greater importance for the perpetual interests of the Truth, than the right doctrine of the ministry of the Christian Church? I was myself, as you are aware, led to this doctrine upon the final observation of the fact, that the Episcopal ministry is the only ministry which has had power for the last three hundred years, "to have and to hold" the right doctrine of the Holy Sacraments.

It does seem to me that, in the circumstances of the case, the preservation and perpetual use of the Book of Common Prayer, with its Baptismal and Eucharistic offices, is one of those remarkable providences which should challenge the heed of every individual whose attention has been directed towards the subject of the Christian Sacraments. It is simply a fact, that to the

Episcopal Church, and to no other, is owing the preservation of the Reformed doctrine, which is the catholic truth. It was my own habit, for a long time, to attribute this remarkable fact to the mere moral and disciplinary influence of the Prayer-Book—not stopping to ask how that Prayer-Book came to possess so wonderful a liturgic embodiment of the truth, nor how it happened that the Liturgy itself has continued in actual use, notwithstanding the constant tendency of the rational mind to impugn its truth. I must confess that I found no explanation of the phenomenon, except in the consideration that the Liturgy, which has preserved the Catholic truth concerning the Christian Sacraments, was prepared by, and has continued to be under the care of, that order of ministry to which the sacramental commission was at the first entrusted. I would that others in like circumstances, who feel the solemn importance of correct views on Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and see that it is impossible to keep such views except by the aid of liturgical offices, might reflect whether there be not force in the above consideration.

Three things, as it seems to me, are at this day (or might be) patent to the observation of all men; one of these is, that Sacramental truth can only be kept by means of a Liturgy; the other is, that a Liturgy containing the true doctrine of the Sacraments cannot now be made; the third consideration is, that the Liturgy which has the true doctrine, and is at this day a living institute, is Episcopal. It is quite natural that the minister of the Gospel who believes that right views of the Sacraments are of the essence of a perpetual Church, and form the inspired basis of a full

Christian nurture, and complete parochial work, should be attracted by the singular fact that the Episcopal Church has remained true to its standards.

That the body of Christian people with whom I held ecclesiastical connection, has, together with all others, except the Episcopal, departed from the views of the Reformers on the Christian Sacraments, I am entirely constrained to believe. The doctrine that the Sacraments are channels of grace to men, is as clearly the doctrine of the Westminster Confession as it is of the Prayer-Book. Whereas the idea that grace is conveyed through Sacraments, is certainly a foreign, if not revolting, idea to most of the Presbyterian churches in this land—to all except the German. The Sacraments are looked upon as divinely commanded services, and therefore to be solemnly observed; they are not come to as means of the reception of grace. The very highest view taken is, that they are seals upon grace already existing in the individual. The astonishing looseness of feeling on the subject of infant baptism, and the utter absence of desire for the Communion in sickness, show that the Sacraments are not principally looked upon in the light of a privilege by Presbyterian Christians. Indeed I must say, that, on the part of younger communicants, the Sacrament is not so much a season of rest and refreshment, as of the performance of a duty in some degree irksome from its awfulness, and from the mental indefiniteness of the act—so very defective is the prevalent teaching on the subject. I hope I do no wrong to my former brethren in making these statements. I believe that they are true, or I should not make them. Possibly there are Presbyterian ministers who hold that the Sacraments

are seals of grace in more than a merely declarative sense, but the number must be few indeed. I know there are many Presbyterian Christians who will seem to speak in high terms of the Sacraments, because the Confession of Faith so speaks, but I have not seen a Presbyterian congregation sacramentally brought up. I do not know, and have never heard of, a Presbyterian congregation in this country, which trains its children for Holy Communion upon the ground that they have been baptized.

If any Presbyterian communicant judge these lines to do him wrong, I am willing to leave the question to his own decision, after he has read the Ninth Chapter of the Directory for Worship, and then asked himself what was the character of the questions put to him by the Session which admitted him to the Communion; and also after he has read the 167th Question of the Larger Catechism, and then asked himself how often he has been thus taught to "improve his baptism all his life long." I would particularly request of such a one that he would stop at the "*grace of baptism*," which he is there counseled to "repent of having fallen short of," before coming to his decision of the question. There can be no doubt that the almost universal practice of Presbyterian Sessions, in the admission of candidates to the Lord's Supper, is one which was distinctively Congregational, and which the old Presbyterian fathers absolutely abhorred. There is as little doubt that the cause of this enormous excrescence upon the system is due to the fact, that all or nearly all real faith in the "grace of baptism" has become obsolete.

It was the observation of facts such as these, which

led me to judge that there must be some Diviner system for the conservation of the Truth. I only wonder that I did not sooner see that for the preservation of *Sacramental* truth there *must* be a Divine System; that it is for ever beyond the reach of any uninspired organization to hold fast to that which is so above all human devising, so difficult of comprehension and retention, by a merely mental effort, so liable to be dissipated by the action of that rationalistic element, which every son of Adam carries in his bosom, as is the Sacramental Truth which lies at the very foundation of Christ's holy Church.

Such, Right Reverend Sir, was my own experience as it respects the great Episcopal fact of the last three hundred years. It may be of service to others, and therefore am I glad of this opportunity of stating it. Would that all who feel the importance of a Liturgy might see that there can be no Liturgy without a Bishop, and would that all might feel the importance of a Liturgy.

The admirable Sermon which you have entrusted to my care approaches the subject of Church Government from a different line of direction, but both converge upon this one central truth of the whole matter, that wherever the Church as the perpetual pillar and ground of the Truth has been, there hath ever been the inspired order of the Episcopate.

It has been suggested to me that there might be some readers who would not understand the absence, in this Discourse, of any statement of the moral qualifications of the Ministry. The subject, as here discussed, did not call for such statement, but lest the effect of the discussion might else be injured with any

readers, allow me to quote a short section from the Canons, showing what moral qualifications the Church requires in her ministers.

“It is also to be made known to every candidate, for whatever order of the ministry, that the Church expects of him what never can be brought to the test of any outward standard,—an inward fear and worship of Almighty God, a love of religion, and a sensibility to its holy influences, a habit of devout affection, and, in short, a cultivation of all those graces which are called, in Scripture, the fruits of the Spirit, and by which alone His sacred influences can be manifested.”
Canon 2, § v.

I am, Right Rev. Sir,

Very truly your ob't servant,

W. A. DOD.

PREFACE BY THE EDITOR.

It is evident from unmistakable signs, that the question of Church Government is again coming up for discussion. It will be more generally and more thoroughly canvassed than ever before in the course of American Church history. The progress of the argument to this time, has constrained the non-episcopal bodies to assume an union upon common ground, as over against the stand-point of Episcopacy. But this, of itself, is causing interior troubles in many cases—the position assumed is resented by some, and so has led to a revived examination of denominational peculiarities, and to consequent controversy on disputed and unsettled points. Then too, this assumption of a general fellowship has awakened old prejudices and suspicions, so that while the denominational feeling would seem to be growing stronger, and party lines drawing tighter, the essential weakness of the denominational principle is only the more clearly revealing itself.

There are those who see this. The fact is impressing many minds. There are those who see that in the single respect in which the various Christian bodies are really one, (the common acknowledgment of one Lord), the Episcopal Body is equally with them, and that in all

other respects the posture of fellowship is merely a thing put on. They see that there is no more real union and communion between Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians, than between them and Episcopalians. They see that as it respects *ministerial interchange*, which is the identical form in which the profession of denominational fellowship would, of course, declare itself were it a reality, there is literally none of it *as such*—ministerial brethren of the denominations do not exchange pulpits upon the principle of a commutual recognition of orders, but on the score of personal acquaintance, which alone will warrant such exchange without fears and suspicions. Much less would they exchange in *Sacramental offices*, which alone could answer the purpose of a fair criterion. There is far more true Christian feeling between Episcopalians and the denominations than there is between the denominations themselves.

Now, it ever has been the case in time past, when, for whatever reason the essential weakness of the denominational principle has so revealed itself as to lead the minds of men into a fair posture for the examination of the Episcopal argument, that the result has tended in one way. It adds to the numbers of those who see that the true government of the Church is that which has no peculiarities, but is one and the same from the beginning.

Another thing which is attracting, and will yet much more arrest the attention of the Christian people of this land, is the palpable fact that the Episcopal Constitution is the only one which is its own successor, of all the religious bodies which have been planted on our soil. Questions of doctrine, or of discipline, or

latterly the great social questions of the day, have rent them every one asunder, some of them time and again. No one of them has been able to preserve a historic continuity, even for so short a time as this!

When, alongside of changes and departures such as these, is beheld the Episcopal Church, manifestly and perfectly identical with that which was first planted in the land, nay, at whose altars Cranmer himself might minister precisely as he did of yore; nay, more, at whose altars S. Chrysostom, or Irenæus, or Ignatius, would find a familiar Service—assuredly it will be noted that there is a permanency here which is remarkable. Still more, one of greater worth in this comparison than any uninspired man could possibly be, one to whom were said the words, “Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins,” and who said the words, “The cup of blessing which we bless is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ,” would in every Episcopal Church, throughout this land, find a Font whose Baptismal waters are consecrated unto “the mystical washing away of sin,” and an Altar where the Cup is blessed, in a service which has never once ceased to declare that It is the Communion of His Blood.

The following Discourse will show the candid reader, in a way I cannot conceive how he shall be able to resist, the Scriptural reasons for recognizing in the ministry of this perpetual and undivided Altar, the undoubted Apostolic Ministry of the Christian Church. In place of preparing the usual table of contents for the Discourse, I take the liberty of subjoining the following extract from a letter of Bishop Otey’s, which will be found to give a condensed summary of the argument.

“ I read the four Gospels, and there learn what I am to *believe* concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, and His doctrine. There is the *basis* of my *faith*. I read the Acts of the Apostles, and there learn how my faith is to be reduced to practice, or what I must *do* to become a Christian. I read the Epistles, and am there taught how I must *behave* myself, as a professed follower, a disciple of Christ. All this is what we call plain sailing, avoiding all the rocks and breakers of speculative theory.

“ Again, I look at the 28th chapter of St. Matthew, and find that our Lord after His death and resurrection, and previous to His ascension, came to the Eleven disciples, and gave them that commission which clothed them with plenary powers to settle the order and government of His Church—‘All power, &c.’ I find that Matthias (Acts, i.) is chosen, and numbered among the Apostles; also that Paul and Barnabas, to name no others, are called to the same distinction. Here is unquestionably one order of the Ministry of Christ. I find (Acts, vi.) another order called Deacons, and them preaching and baptizing—(See Acts, vi. vii. and viii). In Acts, xiv. 23, I find another order called Elders, ordained by Paul and Barnabas. I see the same order afterwards spoken of in the Epistles, under the names of Bishops, Elders, and Presbyters. Here then I am obliged, without entering into discussion about the powers of the respective orders, to admit that *Three Orders* of Ministers did exist in the Apostolic Church, and that with this constitution of the Christian ministry the Canon of the New Testament closes. This is my *first* conclusion.

“ I examine the chronology of the New Testament,

and I find that a ministry was commissioned—Sacraments ordained and administered, and the word of salvation preached before (years before) the New Testament was written. I am bound, if I reverence the authority of Christ, to hold that the *word*, *ministry*, and *sacraments*, are necessary to the constitution of His Church. Hence I conclude that the Church is an institution which grows out of the work of the ministry—that the ministry in point of time, authority and appointment, precedes the Church; and we all at this day act practically upon the truth of that position, by sending the *ministry* with the *word* and *sacraments*, when we would plant the Church in a heathen nation. This is my *second* conclusion.

“The apostles went forth in the name of Christ. They never pleaded any authority for their teaching and acts, apart from that of the Lord Jesus Christ. I hold then that all men who reverence the authority of Christ profess to act in His name, or by His authority; as a necessary consequence this authority must be a *delegated* authority—surely they must be few who claim an *inherent* or *natural* right to act in this case. If *delegated*, then it is an authority which must “*ex necessitate*,” be *conferred*, and consequently must also be *transmissible*. This is my *third* conclusion. I cannot escape then from the premises which the New Testament furnishes, and therefore I reach, or rather I am forced to, this other and *final* conclusion:

“That the *Order* of the Gospel is equally with the *Faith* of the Gospel, an integral part of Revelation, and as unalterable as its Sacraments, or any other part of it which rests upon the universally acknowledged authority of a ‘Thus saith the Lord.’” W. A. D.

S E R M O N.

S E R M O N .

“Thou hast tried them which say they are Apostles, and are not; and hast found them liars.”—Rev. ii. 2.

AMONG the commendations bestowed by that glorious Being, whom St. John saw in the isle of Patmos, clothed with all the emblems of heavenly and eternal majesty, is that related in the words of the text, as conferred upon the angel of the Church of Ephesus. It is worthy of notice that St. Peter also, in his second Epistle, warned the primitive Christians that false teachers should arise among them to mislead and deceive, as there had been false prophets among the people of Israel. The appearance of such disturbers only marks more emphatically the truth of Christianity, by the fulfilment of the predictions of Christ and his Apostles.

That it is the interest of believers to possess clear views of the faith once delivered to the saints, and assured participation of the privileges of the Gospel—that it is their religious duty to

seek such advantages, availing themselves of all helps and facilities which Providence may vouchsafe, and that they are accountable to God for the faithful fulfilment of this duty, surely, requires neither reason nor argument to demonstrate. The fact is notorious, and as lamentable as notorious, that there is not a doctrine belonging to the Gospel, from the nature of the Messiah himself, down to the nature of the bread and wine, with which his "death is shown forth till he come," upon which *opposite* views are not entertained by different independent Christian societies. The truth is obvious that a man reared in any one of these associations, or attracted to it by circumstances, acts as reasonably and as safely in presuming its purity without inquiry, as any other man attaching himself to a different organization, who makes the same presumption respecting its pure and safe character from similar notions. And thus the inference is overwhelming, that if the profession of a sound faith and solid privileges be of any consequence and benefit to the soul, he who is content to be blown about by the first wind of doctrine which he happens to encounter, without consulting the volume of inspiration by the light of impartial reason, neglects his highest spiritual interests, and a plain spiritual duty.

We are fully sensible that in the discussion of

all such questions as that suggested by the text, looking to the determination of ministerial authority, it is exceedingly difficult to avoid what is called a *sectarian* course of remark. But such a course, we think, can be avoided, and, if possible, we intend to avoid it on the present occasion.

To this end it is only requisite, that we pursue the inquiry with a view to *truth* wherever it may lead, and not with a purpose of finding some practicable way to conclusions which we wish to reach. Observe, it is not our intention to seize on some *conclusion or principle*, held or discarded by any church and argue that such conclusion or principle is true or false. It is our object to show that the subject *deserves inquiry*: that it is the duty of Christians to examine carefully *what* and *where* the truth is, and to conform their religious attachments to the *results* of that examination. To this end, I shall begin with an element so essential to the form of Christianity, that every system must possess it in some shape or other, right or wrong, lawful or unlawful, consistent or inconsistent; and then throwing aside all regard to what this church or that maintains about it, let us follow truth by the light of reason and Scripture, whithersoever it may lead us. If, at the close of our investigation, we find ourselves on what is called sectarian and exclusive ground, it may, perhaps, console us to perceive,

that we also come in to share the commendation bestowed on the angel of the church of Ephesus, who had tried those who said, "they were Apostles; but were not, and were found to be liars."

Well, there is one element which not only the slightest glance at Scripture, but the least exercise of common sense shows to be essential to the very being of a visible Church of Christ, that is, a *ministry* constituted in accordance with the *appointment of the Holy Spirit*, which organized the Church, and of whose blessed influences that organization contains the instituted channel. Observe, that I am not now asserting or insinuating that a ministry, in order to be lawful and scriptural, must be constituted on the principle which any particular church adopts. I only assert what no Christian can dispute; that some principle or other is requisite to constitute a lawful ministry, and without that constitution, whatever it may be, no ministry is lawful. This follows from the obvious and admitted fact, that all men are not lawful ministers—all the flock are not appointed shepherds. Unless all men have been appointed ambassadors of Christ, and intrusted with the stewardship of the mysteries of God, there must be some criterion, by which to distinguish who are such ambassadors and stewards, and who are not. For instance, I ask you, why are you willing to receive sacred min-

istrations at my hand, and why refuse them at the hand of the friend who sits at your side? There must be some reason operating upon your minds; and let us see what it is, and whether it is valid and safe. I hope it is not, merely, because I present myself as an ambassador of Christ, and others are willing to receive me as such. The same reason would compel you to receive any false prophet, who should succeed in deluding other men. In heathen lands, it would sustain the Brahmin and condemn the Missionary. In our land it would commend the prophet of Mormonism to your pious deference and esteem. Men of the world, mere spectators of Christianity, may with some show of consistency grant out of courtesy what, until they change their religious position, they had no motive to scrutinize. They are led by none, they cannot be misled by any. But those who are in the fold are expressly warned against persons who should present themselves in the name of Christ and deceive many. That is decisive. Remember, when you are told, or when you tell us, that it is uncharitable or stupid not to admit any man as a messenger of Christ, whom other men admit as such, our Saviour warns us to be thus uncharitable and stupid, if we have no better reason than this for receiving them. Well, is it on account of natural or acquired qualities; any learning, or eloquence,

or reputation, that we ought to receive men as ministers? No: on this principle Simon Magus would have had no occasion to buy, as he foolishly thought, ministerial powers from St. Peter. On the contrary he would have had more evident credentials. No man is *born* a minister, or a maker of ministers; neither can he acquire such power by any human art or qualities. Such qualities can no more constitute a minister, than the natural qualities of water and wine would make them sacramental elements, in the absence of divine institution. So that, no matter how learned or eloquent, or venerable a man may be, it is no reason at all, to admit his ministerial offices, and we ought to avoid them, unless we have other and better reasons.

Well, is acknowledged and manifest *piety* a decisive criterion of the ministry? Certainly not; unless every pious Christian is also a minister. If the office belonged of right to the most pious Christian in the congregation, it would often fall to females. But no humble Christian, and, therefore, no pious one, would assume it, or could say to his brethren, "stand aside for I am holier than thou." Besides, since no man can see into the minister's heart, whether it is right in the sight of God, no man could ever be assured on this principle, that he had received the privileges of Christianity. Our Saviour tells us

that a person may be wicked, and still a lawful and sufficient minister; that at the day of judgment, many will appear, who have prophesied—that is *preached* in his name—in his name cast out devils and done many wonderful works, to whom, nevertheless, he will say, “I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” Consequently, whosoever argues that a man ought to be received as a minister, because he is a *good man*, might just as well say that a man ought to be acknowledged as a magistrate because he is a learned man.

Well, in the next place, is success in bringing men from sin to holiness, and from the power of Satan unto God, a sufficient test of the ministerial office? Let us see: we observe that the same man is successful at one time and place, and unsuccessful at another time and place;—is he a lawful minister in one instance and not in the other? Or must Christians always wait to see whether a man is successful, before they receive him as a minister? Or by what degree of success then must it be measured? Or in the ministerial body of any Church, are the successful the only lawful ministers, and the unsuccessful no ministers at all? No, every man must be a minister, and be received as a minister, before his labors can have any result, successful or otherwise. Therefore, whosoever argues that a man

is a lawful minister, because he labors successfully, says what is nothing at all to the purpose. But, perhaps, you are ready to ask, if he be not a lawful minister, *how do you account for his success?* Nothing more easy. The saving efficacy is the property of the *word*. It does not flow from the instrument by which it is wielded. And the word of God, not only in the hands of a man's minister, but in his own hands, in the hands of his wife or child, may through grace be effectual to his salvation. But it is not to himself, or to his wife or child, or to any person but a lawful minister of God, to whom he can resort for the privileges of Christ's Church.

Let us now stop a moment, and consider where we are, and what conclusion we have reached. We have determined, from the nature of the Christian ministry, that various popular considerations are entirely destitute of any legitimate relations to the truth which we investigate. We have found that though a man present himself with all confidence as a minister, and though bodies of men, with all confidence, receive him; though he be able, and learned, and eloquent, and devout, and zealous, and successful in preaching the word; all this has nothing to do with the decisive question, whether he is to be recognized as a minister of God. We have now examined and passed by all the *presumptions* of

the ministerial power, upon which it is commonly recognized, and we perceive that common sense teaches, that all such presumptions are to be regarded as groundless. Our only resource now is to *search the Scriptures*. We find that no person—not the Apostles—not the Saviour himself—ever *assumed* the priestly office. “Christ glorified not himself to be called an High-Priest, but He that said unto him, *This day have I begotten thee!*” The Scriptures tell us that Christ commissioned his Apostles with the words, “*As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*” as it was a part of His commission to send them, so these words made it a part of their commission to send others.

It is not to be supposed that Christians would recognize any man as a minister, unless he had been *ordained* by a minister or ministers. The Scriptures on that point are of acknowledged clearness. Now, observe, if no man is a lawful minister unless he has been ordained by ministers, it follows that lawful ordination must flow of necessity from the original source to which it was delegated. And thus it becomes as clear as the noontide blaze, that there can be no utility or reason in the almost universal practice of ordination, unless it be a part of a succession of ordinations which reach from the Apostles. It is an undeniable fact, that the ministerial authority

was viewed in this light by the early Christians throughout the world, wheresoever the ministers of the Gospel first propagated the faith. Thus Eusebius, the first ecclesiastical historian after the Apostolic age, is careful to record a list of the succession of Bishops in the principal churches of his day: as of Rome, *beginning with Linus*—of Jerusalem, *beginning with St. James*—whom the Scripture show to have presided at the first ecclesiastical council, held by the Apostles, elders, and brethren—of Antioch, *beginning with Evodius*—and at Alexandria, *beginning with St. Mark*, down to his own cotemporaries. On this subject hear Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, where he was martyred just one hundred years *after the death of St. John*! “We can reckon up those whom the Apostles ordained to be Bishops in the several churches, and who they were that succeeded them, down to our own times. For they desired to have those perfect and unreprouvable, whom they left to be their successors, and to whom they committed their own place of government.”

But there is yet a further question to be determined respecting the divine institution of a ministry. It is necessary to ascertain not only *how* it exists, but, *in what form*?—whether with a *distinction of orders*, so that certain functions can only be performed by particular grades; or

whether there is a parity of rank established between all ministers. Now, as regards this subject, the simple question for you to consider is this : It is very certain that if you find inequality of rank and difference of function in the New Testament, there must be the same inequality now ; for God has not altered His appointment since the canon of the New Testament was closed. Has any one now, or since the age of the Apostles, power or authority to change that appointment ? If not, then the plain and undenied facts of the New Testament, it would seem, ought to be decisive as to all questions touching the Christian ministry.

Let us look at some of those facts : The first recorded and official act of the Apostles and brethren—or of the disciples—after the forty-days' instruction by Christ were ended, and he had ascended to his mediatorial throne in the Heavens, as we read in the first chapter of the Acts, was the election of Matthias and his reception into the number of the Apostles. On the day of Pentecost, Christian baptism, or baptism in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for the remission of sins, was, for the first time, performed. In the sixth chapter of the Acts, we read of the appointment and ordination, by the Apostles, of the seven Deacons. We read in the 14th chapter of Acts, of the

ordination of Elders by Barnabas and Paul, and repeatedly afterwards we find mention made of the same order styled indifferently, Elders, Presbyters, Bishops, and Overseers. These are simple facts, showing conclusively the existence of these orders of ministers in the Church of Christ during the Apostolic age. With this arrangement, the testimony of the New Testament ends. Now, a word as to their functions. We have already noticed the fact of Matthias' introduction into the Apostolic college—the setting apart of the seven Deacons by the Apostles, and the ordination of Elders by Barnabas and Paul, called also Apostles. We now go a step further and assert, that not one single instance of the conferring of orders, by other than Apostolic hands, or by express designation by our Lord himself, can be found in the New Testament.

But more yet: about the time of St. Stephen's death we learn that Philip—one of the seven Deacons—went down to Samaria, and, by his preaching, brought many of the Samaritans to receive the Gospel. He wrought many miracles, and, by baptism, received both men and women into the Church. Upon this information the Apostles at Jerusalem sent two of their number, Peter and John, down to Samaria. For what purpose? Their actions, as recorded by St. Luke, will most plainly declare. When Peter and

John “were come down, they prayed for them,” (the men and women of Samaria baptized by Philip,) “that they might receive the Holy Ghost”—a gift, in those days, held to be necessary to the completion of Christian character. “Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.” Thus it is perceived that Philip had authority to preach and to baptize—that he could work miracles of such power as to astonish and convince the Samaritans, but that it was necessary for Peter and John, notwithstanding, to journey all the way from Jerusalem to exercise a ministerial function, for which Philip had no authority. What must you infer from this state of facts? What would you say? *That Philip, Peter, and John, were ministers of equal grade, and exercised the same functions?* If you did, you would compel us to think, that fact and reasoning would be lost upon you.

But, perhaps, you will say, that the Apostolic office was not intended to be continued, and even the name *Apostle* has been dropped in all churches, as a name inapplicable to any body or order of Christian ministers. It was very natural that the *name* should be discontinued for a reason assigned by very early ecclesiastical writers, as Isidore and Theodoret, in the third and fourth centuries. It was very convenient and proper that the first and noblest band who received the

office from Christ himself, should have a peculiar name by which to be distinguished when referred to. And, therefore, we find that men who were Apostles, and are so called in the New Testament, such as Barnabas and Timothy, have never been so called by Christians since the original "glorious company" departed to their reward. And yet, remember the declaration of Irenæus, who, as I said, was martyred exactly one hundred years after St. John, the last survivor. "We can reckon up those whom the Apostles ordained to be Bishops in the several churches, and who they were that succeeded them, down to our own times." But that the Apostolic office was continued, by the elevation of other men, who exercised some of their functions and held the same grade in the government of the Church, is expressly shown by the scriptural facts that Paul had the same office with the original Twelve, and Barnabas had the same office with Paul. While Timothy at Ephesus, Titus in the large and populous island of Crete, Epaphroditus at Philippi, have not only the name of Apostles, but they exercised the same high powers of discipline and regimen in the places assigned to them. *There is one office continued as far as the inspired record extends, without any hint how, why, or when, or by whom it was to be discontinued.* Well, we read every where of another grade of officers,

generally called *presbyters*, who were inferior to the first. Thus in the Church at Ephesus, the Presbyters were to be *ordained* by Timothy only; by him to be admonished; by him to be *tried*; by him *charged* as to *doctrine to be taught*: from all which it must be indisputably clear that these presbyters had no official power to *ordain*, *admonish*, try, or charge either Timothy or each other: that it was no part of their office to perform the higher ministerial functions, and therefore, until one thousand five hundred years afterwards, there is not an instance, in ecclesiastical history, of the assumption and exercise of these powers by presbyters. Turn to the island of Crete and we find precisely the same state of things. We find one man, Titus, stationed in that most populous region of all antiquity, famed for its hundred cities, charged by St. Paul to "set in order the things that were wanting, and ordain elders in every city;" to rebuke sharply such as taught things contrary to sound doctrine, and to exhort with all long-suffering and authority. Now, it is clear that Timothy and Titus exercised jurisdiction over numerous other presbyters. This cannot be denied without denying St. Paul's veracity. If, then, reliance be placed upon *names*, Timothy is called an Apostle. If upon things, upon official *functions*, we desire any one to show us the thing or func-

tion peculiar to the Apostolic office which did not belong to Timothy.

The sum of what we have now said is this :
1. That there was imparity in the ministry of the Church as divinely constituted. 2. That there was an order of ministers called *Deacons*, whose office it was to preach, baptize, and serve tables. 3. That there was a higher grade called *Presbyters*, who besides preaching and baptizing, administered the Lord's Supper, and had the oversight of congregations, but possessed no power to ordain or control *other ministers*, but were themselves under the supervision of a higher officer invested exclusively with the power of ordination and authority to exercise ministerial discipline. Any Church which maintains this triple arrangement, with the principle of succession preserved through the highest grade, is a Church of Apostolic constitution and ministry ; and it is pleasing to reflect that this constitution is yet clung to by the large majority of all those "who profess and call themselves Christians." The small fraction of those who dispense with it, are obliged, nevertheless, to admit that it was universal, at least as early as one hundred years after the death of St. John, and was unquestioned ever after, down to the time of Calvin, the author of the Presbyterian polity ; and many of the most learned of those who have been his follow-

ers, as Grotius, Le Clerc, and Baxter himself, concede that it was the original Apostolic constitution.

Before we dismiss this subject to the judgment of your reason enlightened by revelation, we must submit to you a brief comment on two popular maxims, which though they directly traverse each other, are favorite topics to objectors among Christians as well as among unbelievers.

The first objects to the principle involved in the text, that pretensions to the Gospel ministry are legitimate subjects for inquiry and trial, because all such investigations, by obtruding upon public view, the dissensions of Christians, are injurious to society and to religion. The second maxim popularly held, with not much consistency, but with equal truth, affirms that after all it is better for the world and for the Gospel that there should be differing sects.

To the first objection, we answer, that if divisions among Christians are an eye-sore and an evil, the plain dictate of reason and duty is that if possible they be cured. Doubtless there were those among the Ephesians, who deemed it best to institute no examination into the claims of those pretenders to the apostleship, and who, when tried, were found to be liars. They did not wish to agitate society; they were reluctant to hurt men's feelings by questioning the validity

of their pretensions. Such are the usual baits which Satan throws out to entrap men into error. Common sense and observation teach us, that the natural and only sure cure of difference of opinion, is *candid examination*. A course to which truth and sound reason never objected. But in order to reason, there must be *conviction*, and in order to conviction there must be *inquiry and reflection*. Otherwise, there is no alternative but the further and endless multiplication of sects; for there will always arise erratic spirits to draw away mankind from beaten paths, and the division which owes its origin to enthusiasm, is perpetuated by the violation of that principle which Christianity enjoins to "prove all things and hold fast that which is good." The violation being perpetuated by those who are reared in the sect, or attracted to it by circumstances; and thus by the repetition of the process, this becomes the prolific parent of other and countless divisions of the Christian name.

But why should any wish to *cover* or conceal these divisions of Christianity, as if they were derogatory to the Gospel itself? The defect is not in the Gospel, but in the nature of man. There is nothing to be ashamed of, but the human weakness and corruption—and the mischief arises in this case from the simple and patent fact, that men are held responsible for the exer-

cise of their rational free-will in the concerns of religion, and that all men meet and fulfil this responsibility, as they discharge all other duties, with more or less fidelity and exactness. What reasonable man would find fault with the sun because a cloud prevents the earth from reflecting his rays? Now the fault of these divisions is not with the luminary of the Gospel, but in the mists which are exhaled from man's own earthly nature. It is permitted to his free-agency to *reject* the Gospel, and we see that his folly avails itself of the permission. Is it strange then that he should also pervert, and distort, and mutilate it? Evidently if it is no stain upon the Gospel, that it does not exact irresistibly, a *primary* understanding and acceptance from human reason, it can be no stain upon it, that it does not irresistibly exact a *perfect* and *unanimous* understanding. Let us blush for ourselves, beloved brethren, and not for the Gospel. Let us endeavor to cure the evil of division at its source, in the dereliction or neglect of duty, and not weakly cover it up, as if we were really ashamed of our religion.

But, in the last place, if it be injurious to notice these divisions, how can it be that their existence is beneficial? And yet this is jealously maintained by many, who are most disposed to throw a mantle over the unsightly spectacle of a

divided Christianity. And why is it deemed better for the common cause of Gospel truth and order that there should be differing sects? Because, such divisions, it is alleged, tend to preserve the *purity* and *vitality* of Christianity—as the jealousy of rival political factions guards the great interests of free government. This argument might be of some weight and force if Christ's kingdom were of this world. But the illustration offered, and the inference based upon it, are discreditable to Christianity, and insulting to its author. The maxim, as thus developed, makes it expedient, for the interests of piety, to keep up between rival Christian bodies, that system of emulation and strife which thinking men have already discarded on *moral grounds*, from the intellectual training of *school-boys*. In plain terms, the Gospel according to the popular idea, is dependent for the preservation of its purity and vitality, on mutual opposition and censorious watchfulness among the sectarian fragments!—that is, on the works of the flesh which St. Paul says, are these—at least, in part—“hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies.” In short, a certain offence called *schism*, of which we read in the New Testament, has not only lost all its sinfulness in our day, but become a valuable instrument for subserving the interests of piety. Men have found

out, it seems, that it is good for "the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth," to be *connected* by *disjunction*—we must *strengthen* it by *separation*—we must *purify* it by *contention*—and *revive* it by *convulsion*!

Is this "the peace of Jerusalem," for which we ought to pray? Is this the model of the Zion which "is as a city at *unity* in itself?" Is this the way to detect false Apostles and prove them to be liars? Is this the regard we are to pay to that last affecting prayer of our Saviour for his followers, that they might "all be *one*," even as he was *one* with the Father? Is this the way to obey the injunction of the Apostle, beseeching us "by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that we all speak the same thing"—that there be no *divisions*—no *schismata*—literally no *sects*, among us?

A P P E N D I X .

THE editor of the preceding Discourse sought leave of its venerable author to add some reflections in an Appendix. His own interest in the Discourse, as well as his part in its publication, is due to the fact that he considers it a labor of love towards the family of Christ, having unusual promise. The discovery, which was not made till the editorial work was nearly completed, that Bishop Otey's name stands at the head of the Commission of Unity, appointed by the General Convention to consider the "Memorial" proposition, revealed a coincidence singularly pleasing and hopeful. The editor considers the memorial movement, so called, as the most real and significant evidence of a pure desire for unity which has occurred in modern times, and the spirit in which that proposition was offered to Christian men, and the *spirit with which it was met* by the non-episcopal brethren, did much towards helping him to see where true unity is to be sought.

It had been for a long time his own belief, or at least his hope, that denominational divisions did not violate essential unity, and it was not until he perceived that the denominational spirit was an element, seen and acknowledged to be indispensable to the continuance of denominational existence, that this fond hope was shown to be a delusion. He now asserts what he *has seen* to be the truth, that the spirit which is in the Church invites to unity, while the spirit which is in-

dispensable to the continuance of denominational religion repels it. The feeling universal among Episcopal Christians towards their denominational brethren is one which needs no change in order to unity; the feeling on the part of one religious denomination towards another is such, and necessarily such, that no conceivable change of it could effect their union. What follows! It follows that the question of unity is primarily a question of organization—that is, it is *the question of the Church*. Granting that the doctrinal differences among Churchmen are as great as our brethren say they are, they certainly are not greater than those among themselves, which they affirm do not violate unity—whenever then the various religious denominations shall be able to spend three weeks together in a conciliary church-union, such as our last General Convention, and then go home without the revival of denominational *esprit*, it will be shown that the denominational principle affords equal hope of unity with that of the Church.

The question of unity, let it be repeated for this day, is (the essential truths of Christian doctrine being granted) a question of Church organization. The Episcopal body now shows, its enemies being judges, that the Christian family can be one in one FOLD; even as the domestic family can be one, and made one, and kept one in the same way, and in no other way.

As such, it is a simple question of fact. Did our Saviour *give* and *send* an organization to His Church, or did He not? The question is decided by reading the New Testament records. The Episcopal Church holds, from these records, and has ever so held without one moments variation, that our Saviour did organize His Church, and that he did so by “*giving*” and “*sending*” an organization to it. Denominational Christianity holds, (at this time so universally that the exceptions only prove the rule) that the Church, that is God’s people, the Christian body, organizes itself. They all hold that in effecting such organization, they

should be guided by such principles of organization, or government, as may be gathered from the Sacred Scriptures. The difference between this view and that of the Church, is a difference not of degree but of kind; and that difference will be clearly brought out by the simple question, "Did our Saviour, as a matter of fact, give and send a ministry to His Church, or did the Christian congregation, at the outset, organize, and make its ministers?" The New Testament shows us that the Apostles were given and sent by the Lord to His Church,—shows us that the ministers which were made after them were made by them,—and shows not any instance in which a minister was made in any other way.

If the account given in the xiii. chap. of the Acts be that of an ordination, (and it is the only place in the New Testament which bears the least appearance of the Church's seeming to have made a minister,) then it is one which can be of no use to any known polity except it be that of the Irvingites. The ministers so apparently made by the congregation, were made (if it were so) to be *Apostles*, and to go forth and *individually ordain ministers*.

Equally unavailing is the text in 1 Tim. iv. 14, which has been made the basis of the Presbyterian view of ordination. Granting that it was a presbytery which made Timothy a minister, a very few considerations will show that the text can be of no avail to any Presbyterian polity which has ever existed:

For, in the first place, the Presbyterian polity does not allow that any "gift" is imparted with ordination. Such an idea as that of the "grace of orders," is confessedly opposed to the entire Presbyterian system. That polity holds ordination to be a solemn setting apart of a candidate, who has by a punctual narrative of his religious experience and of his motives in seeking the ministry, made good to the Presbytery a judgment of probability that he has been called of God, and upon that decision, that is, as of one already made

a minister in every real and true sense, they proceed to commission him by the *laying on of hands*. The Apostolic custom is kept up, but it is explicitly denied that grace is conveyed by the act. It assuredly is not according to the phraseology of modern defenders of this way of ordination, to say to a candidate, after the ceremony, "remember the *gift that is in thee* by the laying on of our hands."

But, in the second place, if Timothy was, in any sense, made a minister by a Presbytery, he was made *such* a minister as that he could go and *make a Presbytery*. But such a thing as this has never been contemplated by any Presbyterian polity in the world. This would be making Timothy a *prelate*, which is the identical thing that the Presbyterian polity holds impossible, unscriptural, and pernicious. Nevertheless, Timothy did go and make a Presbytery at Ephesus, and if he did so in virtue of the Presbyterian ordination claimed for him, then he did that which certainly has never been done since by virtue of such ordination. What right then has the Presbyterian polity, which comes so immensely short of the powers of the Presbytery which laid hands on Timothy, to claim any warrant for itself thereby?

But, it has been held by most of the Presbyterian writers of Scotland and of our own country, that Timothy did *not* go to Ephesus to form a Presbytery, but to constitute a Church-session, that is, to ordain "*ruling*" elders. The reasons for taking this view are manifest, for if the elders already at Ephesus were other than "*ruling*" elders, then there was the ordaining power on the spot, and why should Timothy go there *bearing* that power? Suppose, however, that Timothy did go to Ephesus merely to take charge of a congregation, and to constitute a Church-session for them by ordaining ruling elders and deacons. Did this make a *Presbyterian* Church-session? If so, every actual Presbyterian polity has greatly neglected its own Scriptures. Where is a Presbyterian minister

authorized to ORDAIN a ruling elder? Where directed to do so, as Timothy did, by THE LAYING ON OF HANDS? No Presbytery would dare to tell him to do it, for in so doing he would make himself a PRELATE.

And yet that very ruling elder, which the Presbytery will not *ordain*, nor dares suffer a pastor to ordain, nor allow to join in ordaining others, is passed on in actual practice, to the exercise of no less a function than that of judging of the qualifications of applicants for the communion! Set to rule and govern in the Church of God, to watch over the spiritual interests of the flock, leading prayer meetings, exhorting congregations, *questioning candidates as to their spiritual exercises*, making use in reality of a far deeper assumptive prerogative than Timothy's elders, or Timothy himself, ever thought of—and yet having no ordination! O how strange that such an anomaly should be able to co-exist with the thoughtfulness and worth which have characterized the many venerable names of Presbyterian divines! There has never yet existed that Presbytery which has been able to *define a ruling elder*, and yet, that indefinable functionary is allowed to exercise an assumption of powers as it respects applicants for the “sealing ordinances of the Church,” which few bishops have ever thought of using.

But the Presbyterian polity is at fault again at another point, as it respects any actual verisimilitude between its elders, and those ordained by Timothy. It is *enjoined*, in the 17th verse of the 5th chapter of the same Epistle, that those of them who rule well, especially if they labor also in the word and doctrine, shall receive *double honor*. What this means the next verse will show. Where then is the Presbyterian congregation which gives pecuniary support to its elders—even to such of them as labor in exhortation, (for that is all that is left for the laboring in word and doctrine to mean, if so be, Timothy did *not* make a Presbytery at Ephesus?) Here again is one of those inconsistencies which, it is astonishing, has not more

impressed the minds of thoughtful men. The ruling elder principally stands out as one whose business it is to watch over the approach to the altar. How natural, should one suppose, would be the mental association, "why is he not allowed to live of the altar."

But, in the third and last place, we know by Divine revelation, precisely what kind of a Presbytery it was which ordained Timothy, and that it was one which the Presbyterian polity explicitly denies to have any post-apostolic continuance. The gift which was in Timothy was by the laying on of an Apostle's hands, together with that of the Presbytery.

How then can the Presbyterian polity, which in the same breath considers *prelacy*, and *apostolical succession* as the most hurtful errors which have overlaid the true ecclesiastical system, find any warrant for itself, either in that which was done to Timothy before he went to Ephesus, or in that which he did when he came there? Assuredly it has no Presbytery which would care to make a *prelate*, and it makes no minister which it would suffer to make a Presbytery, nay, nor a Church-session "by the laying on of hands."

If, however, it is allowed, as it is by late Presbyterian writers (who are more and more giving up the distinctive defence of the system, and assuming congregational ground) that Timothy was a special messenger bearing a peculiar gift of God by the laying on of the Apostle's hands, to the Christian believers at Ephesus, then everything is granted which the simple truth requires—which is, that Timothy was qualified thereby to be an *ordaining*, evangelist, messenger, ambassador, angel, that is to say, *bishop*, over the Ephesian Churches. Such he was, and as such he acted, for he there ordained chosen men to be presbyters and deacons in the Church of God, by the laying on of his hands, he exercised rule, discipline, and authority over them, he set in order the things that were wanting, he arranged the liturgy and customs of the churches.

Should not then this single case be decisive for the

candid inquirer? The Epistles to Timothy contain more on the subject of church government than any others in the Bible. There is one theory which finds itself perfectly at home with the whole, and with every part of them—it is that which holds the three orders in the ministry, of which bishops are the ordainers, the others the ordained. There is no other theory which can quote these Epistles without incessant contradictions to itself, violence to the Scriptures involved, and tergiversations in argument and practice as compared with the texts claimed.

The question of unity is the question of the *Church*; the Christian body is to be one in one *fold*. The day will, indeed, come when they shall be one in feeling, but the New Testament shows that this is to be brought about primarily and effectually, by means of their being one *in fact*, which is only another way of saying, one in organization or ministry. This organization is designated and characterized by the name *Apostolic*. That is to say, the Apostles are the foundation stones which mark and distinguish the outlines, and occasion the phenomenal existence of that tangible, actual, approachable, body, society, building, which is the Christian fold, the Church of God seen among men. To have a church which is not apostolic, and *so made visible*, that is, which is not organized in the Apostles *fellowship*, as well as doctrine, is certainly *not* to have the Church which was revealed at Pentecost. If it is, then the Society of Orthodox Friends may be as much the Church as any other.

The objection most popular at the present day to this foundation doctrine of apostolic succession is, that bishops do not show forth the apostolic signs of inspiration and miracle. But this objection, if it have force at all, will have force against any ministry in the Church, equally as against the ministry through bishops.

It is manifest at a glance into the New Testament, that the entire ministerial commission was given by our Lord to His Apostles, and derived through them to others. The command to baptize, to preach, to commemorate the holy Eucharist, to rule, to send, was given to the Apostles, and there is no evidence that any one of these, as *ministerial functions*, was ever performed by any except such as had derived the commission to do so, by the laying on of an Apostles hands.

Equally so, the descriptions appellative, of the Christian minister, such as pastor, steward, ambassador, and the like,—these are *Apostolic* descriptions. Look, for example, at the proof-texts for the work and warrant of the ministry, as given in the confessional books of every Christian body, claiming to have a visible ministry, and it will be found, without exception, that they are texts descriptive of Apostles, or else of those who had derived their power to minister from Apostles. All ministerial functions involve an Apostolic claim, otherwise they have not so much as a show of validity from the word of God.

The demand, therefore, is equally legitimate upon a Congregational or Presbyterian Clergyman, as upon a Bishop. “Show us the Apostolic signs of inspiration and miracles, for these your claims to Apostolic texts and functions.” These functions, such as preaching, administering the Sacraments, ordaining, ruling, excommunicating—are in actual exercise by the ministry of every religious body, and there is not a shadow of warrant for them except as derived by Apostolic succession. The objection, therefore, if valid at all, *abolishes the Christian ministry*. That is to say, it abolishes that ordinance of Christ, and the Holy Spirit which was sent into the world to the end the Church of God might be gathered, built up, and sanctified.

More even than this. The objection to Apostolic succession as thus brought against the bishoprick, must if valid, not only abolish each and every Christian ministry, but it invalidates the present identity of every

Christian body as claiming to possess the faith of the Pentecostal Church. It is manifest at a glance into the New Testament, that neither the gift of inspiration, nor that of miracles, was peculiar to the Apostles, but pervaded the entire body of the primitive possessors of the faith. If then, these gifts are essential to the Episcopal, or ministerial succession, they are equally so to any identical succession of the body of Christian believers.

The objection drawn from the absence of inspiration and miracle, as coming from a member of the Society of Friends, places every ceremonially ordained minister, in that respect, upon one and the same footing. As coming from the lips of an unbeliever, it includes every professor of the Christian religion.

We know not but the time may come when the Pentecostal wonders of the Church shall be repeated, and the miraculous working of the Heavenly Power be again made manifest to the senses of men. If it should, if as at the first we should find elders miraculously healing the sick, and casting out devils, deacons endowed with wonder-working power of argument, convincing gainsayers, and private Christians speaking with tongues and prophesying, then may we expect to find bishops also endowed with meet proportion of the general succession.

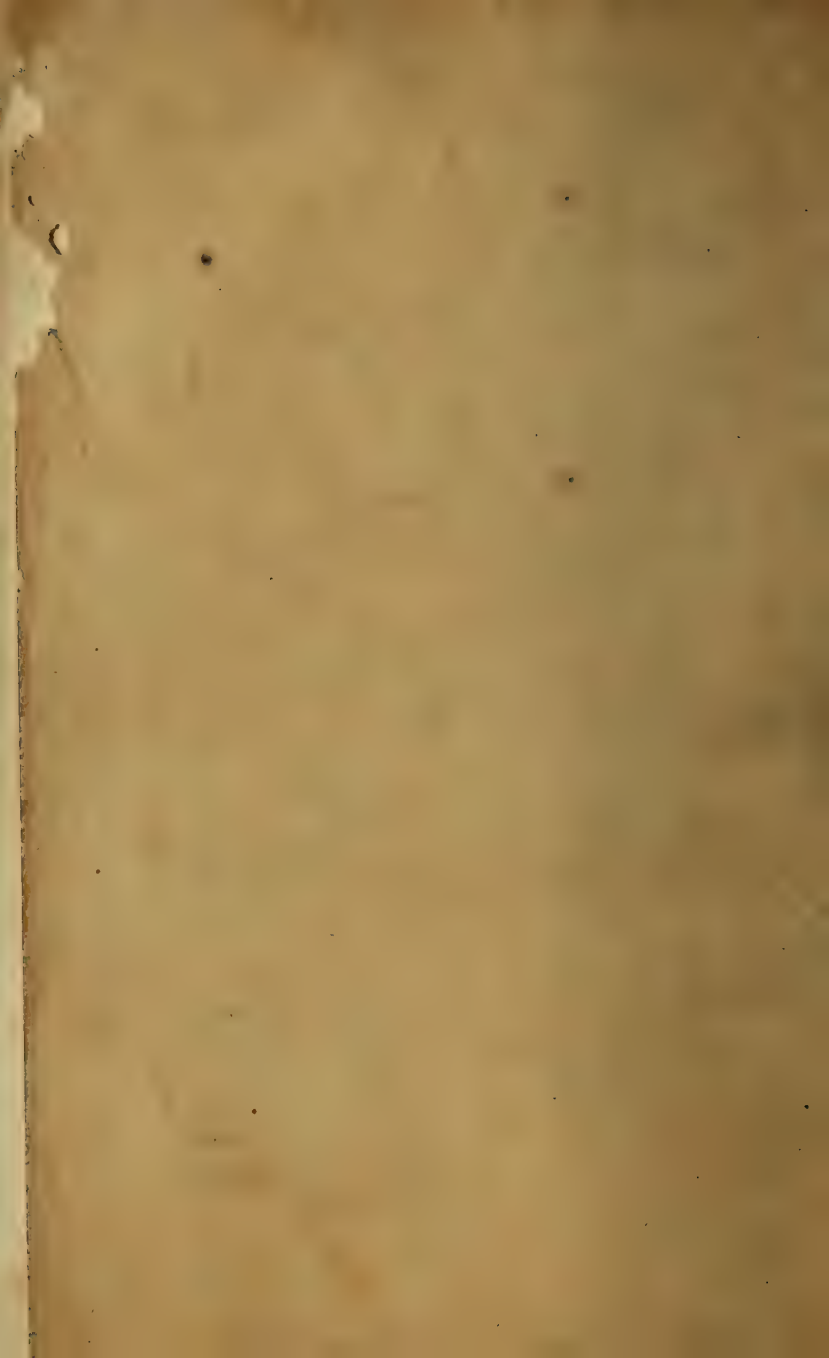
It was not peculiar to the Apostles to be good men, or to be learned men, or to be inspired men, or to be workers of miracles. It was not peculiar to the Apostles to be witnesses of the resurrection, nor to compose the canon of Scripture. It *was* their original and heaven-descended peculiarity to be the ministers of the New Testament, and to ordain others into that ministry, to the end the Church of God might be built up in the world. So also, now, as the preceding discourse so clearly shows, it is not the question as to a man's goodness, or wisdom, or learning, or success, (these are found wherever good men are found, and they are found as much out of the ministry, in all cases, as in

it,) which forms the primary distinction of the New Testament ministry. As the question of unity is the question of the visible Church, so the question of the ministry whereby that Church is organized into visibility is the question of Apostolic succession.

The editor did not intend to attach so many words of his own to this most forcible and conclusive Discourse, but if the part which he has assumed in its publication, may at least not hinder its expected good effect, he shall rest satisfied. May the Spirit of all grace so deign to bless the work as that these expectations, formed in humble dependence upon His sovereign goodness, may not be wholly disappointed.

O God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace ; Give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from Godly union and concord ; that as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and one Hope of our calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of Truth and Peace, of Faith and Charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify Thee ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE END.



A

DISCOURSE

ON THE

DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY,

DELIVERED IN THE CHAPEL, BROMFIELD LANE,

DECEMBER 31, 1826.

By JOSEPH A. MERRILL.

"There are three that bear record in heaven."

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE QUARTERLY MEETING CONFERENCE.



Boston :

PRINTED BY T. R. MARVIN, CONGRESS STREET.

1827.



DISCOURSE.



MATTHEW, III. 16, 17.

And Jesus when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water : and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him : and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

THE doctrine of the Trinity lies at the foundation of Christianity. Deny this and we are utterly at a loss how to understand a large portion of the Bible. It is a doctrine that has been received as one of the first articles of Christian faith in every age of the church. It is contained in all the creeds, ancient and modern, that have reached us ; and though it has been denied, yet the number of those who have denied it, bears no proportion to the number who have embraced and defended it.

Although the general assent of Christians to the doctrine of the Trinity, is not of itself, sufficient proof of the doctrine, yet it is good collateral evidence, and surely is a reason why its friends should be treated with more modesty, and less acrimony than has, in some instances, appeared in the discourses and writings of its enemies.

We rest our belief of the truth of this doctrine upon the scriptures ; and as we consider it to be clearly revealed there, we most cordially embrace it. Nor do we

consider it our prerogative to reject this doctrine because it is mysterious. We are assured in our own minds, that if God has revealed it, it cannot be absurd. While we yield a ready assent to many things in the natural world, though there are mysteries connected with their existence not to be explored or fathomed by finite minds, we cannot reject the precious doctrine of the Trinity in Unity because we cannot understand more of it than God in his wisdom has seen fit to reveal. As we cannot with our arms encompass the world, so with our thoughts we cannot comprehend Deity.

Mystery is neither an object of our faith, nor an objection to it. Mind and matter constitute the being we call man. This we believe. But how these contrary principles are united so as to act together we cannot tell. We can give but a poor account of muscular motion. Who can inform us how the soul acts upon the muscles of the body, so as to produce a motion of the hand or of the foot? We believe there is a God, who existed from eternity, and who fills immensity ; but we can comprehend neither of these attributes. Here is as great a mystery as that of the Trinity in Unity.

That there are in the Godhead three distinctions called Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that these three are essentially and truly the *one God*, we believe ; but of the mode of their union we know nothing and we believe nothing. While the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity is clearly revealed in the scriptures, the *mode* of the divine existence is not revealed. The former is, therefore, an object of our faith as a revealed matter of fact, but the latter is concealed from our knowledge. Nor do we see any absurdity here. If indeed we were to affirm that three are one and one is three ; or that the persons in the Godhead are three in the same sense in which they are one, and one in the same sense in which they are three ; it would be a contradiction, an absurdity, and could not be an article of faith. But to say they are three in one sense, and one in another, involves neither contradiction nor absurdity.

As to the word persons, which we apply to the distinctions in the Godhead, although not found in the scriptures, yet it is a very convenient term, and, if cautiously used, is not in its import, unscriptural. But we can no more define the divine personality, than the divine nature. God is not a man; therefore the word person, when applied to him, cannot bear the same signification as when applied to man. God is not a creature; therefore the word person, when applied to him, cannot bear the same signification as when applied to a creature. God is in his nature and the mode of his existence, unlike all other beings; and, therefore, personality, when applied to him, must be unlike personality in any other case in which we are acquainted with it, or can define it. His existence and personality are peculiar to himself. And it is conceived there is no more absurdity in ascribing personality to Deity, than in ascribing positive existence to him; for the latter of these terms is as inexplicable as the former, when so applied.

The same may be said of the words Trinity and Unity when applied to the Divine Being. He is three and he is one. But in what sense he is three, or in what sense he is one, we cannot tell. These are human terms, and convey human ideas. They are applied to God in the scriptures; but not in the same sense in which they are applied to men. This shows the inconsistency of those who reject the doctrine of the Trinity, while they contend for the doctrine of the Divine Unity. Unity is a human term, and we cannot say that it is any more applicable to the divine nature than the word Trinity. There is doubtless a sufficient analogy between created intelligences and the Creator, to justify the use of this language. But then it should always be used with humility, remembering that we cannot find out the Almighty to perfection.

To attempt a precise definition of the words person, Trinity, and Unity, in their application to Deity, would be ample proof of the arrogancy and presumption of the human mind, and could not be regarded as any thing less

than an attempt to humanize the divine perfections, or to deify weak and erring man.

With these observations in view, and we trust with corroborating feelings and dispositions of heart, let us approach our subject, and endeavor to show from the scriptures of truth, 1st, that there are three distinct persons in the Godhead ; and 2d, that these three persons are one God.

I. That there are three distinct persons in the Godhead.

Our text is proof of this proposition. The Son of God was baptized of John in Jordan, the Holy Ghost descended upon him like a dove, and the Father was heard to speak from heaven at the same time saying, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. These different actions as clearly designate a distinction of persons in the Godhead, as different actions can designate a distinction of persons in any case that can be named.

To consider this subject more particularly, we shall observe,

1. That personality belongs to the Father. Christ is said to be the brightness of the glory, and the express image of the *person* of God ; which he could not be if personality did not belong to God.

As the personality of the Father is not a subject of dispute ; and as it will receive sufficient proof from the personality of the Word, or Son of God, we shall not dwell upon it, but proceed,

2. To consider the personality of the Son.

Father and Son are relative terms, and if Father implies personality, Son must also imply it. We shall not in this place undertake to determine whether Christ be the Son of God by eternal generation, or in reference to his incarnation merely ; but shall maintain this simple proposition ; that his relation to the Father as Son, in whatever sense it is understood, must necessarily imply personality.

That personality belongs to the Son is evident, not

only from the relation he bears to the Father, but also from the offices he sustains and the actions he performs for us as our mediator. He is begotten, sent, and commanded by the Father; he obeys the Father, and offers himself unto God as a sacrifice for sin; he is raised from the dead and sits on the right hand of God; he has received from God the Father a kingdom and power over all things in heaven and upon earth; this kingdom he is to give up to the Father; the Father hath appointed him to judge the world; and finally all things are to be put under the Son, with the exception of him who is to put all things under him. These actions clearly and necessarily mark the Son as a distinct person from the Father. This would not be denied by the Socinians or Unitarians, who consider Jesus Christ either as a man merely, or, at most, as a created divinity.

3. But the grand question respecting personality relates to the Holy Spirit. Those who deny the doctrine of the Trinity, affirm that the Holy Spirit is not a distinct person from the Father and the Son, but is merely a *property* or *operation* of God. It will, therefore, be proper for us to be more full and particular here, and to show that the offices and operations of the Spirit clearly designate him a distinct person in the Godhead.

All those passages of scripture, which distinguish three persons in the Godhead, are so many evidences that the Holy Spirit is a distinct person, and not a mere property or operation of God. Thus the angel to the virgin mother, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke i. 35. In this passage, the "Holy Ghost," is as clearly distinguished from the "power of the Highest," as from the "Son of God," who was conceived under his operation. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth," &c. John xiv. 16, 17. Nothing can be plainer than that three persons are here described, and the Holy Ghost is

not only distinguished by his proper appellation, "The Comforter," but by his being sent by the Father, and abiding with Christians. In another place, Jesus Christ speaks of himself as sending the Comforter from the Father, who, says he, "shall testify of me." John xv. 26. St. Paul, with equal clearness, has taught the same truth. "If the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you." Rom. viii. 11. In this text the Spirit as a person, is clearly distinguished both from Jesus who was raised from the dead, and from him who raised him. So in the following passage,—“But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” 1 Cor. vi. 11. Here again the Spirit is distinguished both from the “Lord Jesus,” and “our God;” and his office and work mark him as a distinct person in the Godhead, since it is by him that we are washed, sanctified and justified. The same important truth is taught by the apostle in his epistle to the Ephesians. “For through him,” the Lord Jesus Christ, “we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” Here also the Holy Ghost is not only distinguished by name from the Father and the Son, but is marked as a distinct person by a distinct agency in the work of our salvation. Ephe. ii. 18. See also the 22, verse. “In whom,” that is in Christ, “ye also are builded together for an habitation of God *through the Spirit.*”

St. Peter is no less explicit upon this head. “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the *Spirit*, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” 1 Pet. i. 2. Nothing can possibly be clearer than a distinction of persons in this text. Here we see the Father electing according to his own foreknowledge; the Son shedding his blood; and the *Spirit* sprinkling that blood upon the hearts of the unclean.

That the Holy Ghost is a distinct person and not an operation of Deity, is evident from the form prescribed for our baptism. “Go ye therefore,” says Jesus to his

apostles, "and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It would be the perfection of absurdity, to say that Christ commissioned his apostles to baptize in the name of three properties or operations of God, and not in the name of the Trinity. And if we allow the Father to be a person, we must allow the Son and Holy Spirit to be persons also. There is precisely the same reason for ascribing personality to the latter as to the former. Does this form of administration express the will and authority of him in whose name we are baptized? Then it expresses the will and authority of three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Does it require that we devote ourselves to, and worship him in whose name we are baptized? Then we are to devote ourselves to, and worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Thus in whatever sense we consider these words, a Trinity of persons is presented to our view, and the Holy Ghost, is as really a person as the Father or the Son. Matt. xxviii. 19. We discover the same doctrine in the form of benediction used by the apostle, 2 Cor. xiii. 14, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all, Amen." As certainly as we are blessed in the name of God, we are blessed in the name of the Trinity; and the Holy Ghost is as truly a person as the Father or the Son. This we must allow, or say that we are blessed in the name of three properties or operations of Deity! But the apostle clearly distinguishes between the Holy Ghost and his operations, "A diversity of operations, but the same Spirit." 1 Cor. xii. 4—6. To deny the personality of the Holy Ghost here, would be to renounce both our own reason and the word of God. *Agency* and *operation*, necessarily imply personality. And the Holy Ghost is represented in the scriptures as the agent and author of his own operations.

We may argue the same truth from the testimony or witness which the Holy Ghost bears with our spirits.

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.” Rom. viii. 16. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” Gal. iv. 6. The plain import of this teaching or witness of the Spirit is, that the Father is reconciled to us through the Son; so that we have a plain demonstration of the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the personality of the Spirit, brought home to our hearts in our own experience.

Finally, the same important truth is taught in a great variety of places in the holy Scriptures, where actions are ascribed to the Spirit which must imply personality; as his reproving the world of sin, enlightening and renewing the mind; strengthening, comforting, sanctifying, and leading into all truth; making intercession in us and helping our infirmities; his being grieved; his calling and qualifying the ministers of the gospel, governing the church, &c. If these actions do not imply personality, it will be difficult for us to give any rational account of personality; and if, when we read of the Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Spirit, we must understand something figurative; it will be impossible for us to fix on any rules, for the interpretation of the Bible; and that blessed book which was given us from heaven, to be a *light to our feet and a lamp to our path*, becomes an *ignis fatuus*, and betrays us into error and misery.

It appears from the Scriptures, that the Holy Ghost “was in the beginning engaged with God in the creation of the natural world—that he is equally the Spirit of God and of Christ—that he proceeded both from the one and the other—that it was he who led the Israelites in the wilderness, and gave them rest after their forty years travel—that if we are to be baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, so also in the name of the Holy Ghost—that if we are blessed in the name of the Father and the Son, so also in the name of the Holy Ghost—that he alone it was who formed the body of Jesus—that he conducted Christ in all the actions of his life—

that he enabled him to work miracles at his own pleasure, and finally raised him from the dead, as he will be the agent in raising the bodies of the whole human race at the last day—that it is he who strives with the hearts of men, illuminating, convincing, reproofing, restraining, and drawing from sin and folly to wisdom, piety, and truth—that it is he who dwells in the hearts of his people as in a temple, claiming our obedience and adoration—that all the qualifications of the apostles and evangelists, for the great work in which they were engaged, were from him—that he enlightened, warmed, and fortified their minds, enabling them to speak strange languages, to work wonders in confirmation of the doctrines they taught, to foretell future events, to speak with wisdom and courage before kings, and confirm their testimony in every way that was suitable with the divine understanding—that this same blessed Spirit is also the inspirer of all ingenious arts and inventions, the reviver of the languishing powers of nature, and the infuser of courage and fortitude into the minds of men—that he is the author of all moral and religious excellence, grace, wisdom, knowledge, goodness, piety, truth,—and whatever else can make us holy and happy here, and prepare us for glory and felicity hereafter—that the prophets and apostles spake only as they were moved by him; and to him we are indebted for all their invaluable writings—that finally, it is his peculiar office to reveal Christ in our minds, and that no man can properly say, that Jesus is Lord, but by a power derived from him. “It is impossible to prove the Father to be a person, or the Son to be a person, in any other way than we may prove the Holy Ghost to be so. For he to whom all personal properties, adjuncts, and operations are ascribed, and to whom nothing is ascribed but what properly belongs to a person, he is a person; and so we are taught to believe him to be. Thus we know the Father to be a person, and the Son also; for our knowledge of things is more by their properties, than by their essential forms. There is no personal property belonging to the Divine

nature, that is not in one place of scripture or other ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

“ If a wise and honest man should come and tell you, that in a certain country where he had been, there is an excellent governor, who wisely discharges the duties of his office ; who hears causes, discerns right, distributes justice, relieves the poor, and comforts the afflicted ; would you not believe that he intended by this description, a righteous, wise, diligent, and intelligent person ? What else could any man living imagine ?

“ But now suppose a stranger, or a person of suspicious character and credit, should come and say, that the former information which you had received was indeed true, but that no *man* or *person* was intended, but the *sun* or the *wind*, which by their benign influences, rendered the country fruitful and temperate, and disposed the inhabitants to mutual kindness and benignity ; and, therefore, the whole description of a governor and his actions, was merely *figurative*, though no such intimation had been given you. Must you not conclude, either that the first person was a notorious trifler, and designed your ruin, if your affairs depended on his report ; or that your latter informer, whose veracity you had reason to suspect, had endeavoured to abuse both you and him ? It is exactly thus in the case before us. The scriptures tell us, that the Holy Ghost governs the church ; appoints overseers of it ; discerns and judges all things ; comforts the weak ; is grieved and provoked by sin ; that in these, and many other affairs, he works, orders and disposes all things, according to the counsel of his own will. Can any man credit this testimony, and conceive otherwise of the Spirit, than as a holy, wise, intelligent *person* ? Now while we are under the power of these apprehensions, there come to us some men, whom we have just reason to suspect of falsehood and deceit, and they tell us that what the scriptures say of the Holy Ghost is indeed true, but that no such *person* is intended by these expressions, but only an *accident*, or *quality*, an *effect*, or *influence* of the power of God, which doth

all these things figuratively ; that he has a *will figuratively*, an *understanding figuratively*, is *sinned against* figuratively ; and so of all that is said of him. Now what can any man, not bereft of his natural reason as well as spiritual light, conclude ? but either that the scriptures designed to draw him into fatal errors, or that those who impose such a sense upon them, are corrupt seducers, who would rob him of his faith and comfort ? Such will they at last appear to be.”*

The foregoing considerations not only support the personality of the Holy Ghost, but also his divinity.

We shall now proceed to some passages which clearly recognise the doctrine of three persons in the Godhead. “Behold my *servant*, whom I uphold ; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth ; I have put my spirit upon him.” Isa. xlii. 1. The Father is here the speaker, the Son the elect servant, and the Holy Spirit is put upon that servant to qualify him for his office. This is the Trinity. The same appears in the following words. “Now the *Lord God* and *his Spirit* hath sent me.” Isa. xlviii. 16. Here is Christ represented as being sent by the Father and the Holy Spirit.

“For the Lord said, surely they are my people, children that will not lie : so he was their Saviour,—The *Angel* of his presence saved them.—But they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit ; therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and fought against them.” Isa. lxiii. 8—10. The Lord, here, is the Father ; the Angel of his presence is the Son ; and the Holy Spirit, the third in the Trinity, is he, who was vexed by the Israelites.

We are taught the same doctrine by the prophet Haggai. “I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts ;—my Spirit remaineth among you ; fear not. For thus saith the Lord of hosts,—I will shake all nations ; and the desire of all nations shall come.” Hag. ii. 7. Here we have the three sacred persons again distinctly mentioned. The Lord of hosts, the first ; the Divine Spirit, the second ; and the desire of all nations, the third ; who is no

* Simpson's Deity of Christ, p. 344, &c.

other than the Son of God. But to proceed. "While he thought on these things, the angel said—that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost,—and thou shalt call his name Jesus." Matt. i. 20, 21. Here we have the *Lord*, the *Holy Ghost*, and the *Son Jesus*. See also Matt. iii. 9—11. Where we find *God*, the *Messiah*, and the *Holy Ghost*. In the following passages we have a sensible demonstration of the same doctrine. "His father Zachariah was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David." Luke, i. 67—69. "It was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ." Luke, ii. 26. "He came by the *Spirit* into the temple—and when the parents brought in the child *Jesus*, he took him up in his arms and blessed *God*." Luke, ii. 27, 28. The attentive hearer cannot fail of discovering the three persons of the Divine Nature in these texts, without an observation to that purpose. "The *Spirit* of the *Lord* is upon me." Luke, iv. 18. The speaker here is the Messiah. "Behold *I send* the *Promise* of my *Father*, the comforter, upon you." Luke, xxiv. 49. It is Christ who speaks here. See also John i. 33, 34, and xiv. 16, 26. "As my *Father* hath sent *me*, even so send I you,—receive ye the Holy Ghost." John, xx. 21, 22. "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me." 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. and iii. 3, 16, 17. "Through *him*," Christ, "we both have access by one *Spirit* unto the *Father*." Eph. ii. 18. "I bow my knees unto the *Father* of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, that he would grant you to be strengthened with might by his *Spirit* in the inner man." Eph. iii. 14, 15. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God—and be kind,—forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you." Eph. iv. 18, 20. "The acknowledgment of the mystery of *God*, and of the *Father*, and of

Christ." Col. ii. 2. "Be filled with the Spirit—giving thanks unto God, and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Eph. v. 18, 20.

These are indeed but a few passages of scripture, in comparison with those that might be produced, did our limits permit, which go directly to prove the doctrine of the Trinity. Being confident that what has been said, establishes the point beyond reasonable contradiction, we shall now attempt,

II. To show that these three persons are one God.

Although Christians in general hold that there are three persons in the Godhead, or Divine Nature, yet they do not hold that there are three Gods, but one only. And we are under no apprehensions, but they will be found the only consistent *Bible* Unitarians who hold this doctrine. For it wholly destroys the *unity* of the Divine Nature, to maintain the doctrine of a created, subordinate, dependant divinity.

There are many things in nature, which, though they cannot prove, or fully illustrate our subject, yet may help us to conceive of a Trinity in Unity. There are in every piece of matter, (the human body for instance,) three inseparable properties, length, breadth, and thickness, yet but one body. We discover three inseparable properties in the human soul, understanding, memory, and will, and yet but one soul. In every human person there is a threefold life, spiritual, animal, and vegetative, and yet but one person. The sun, "is one in essence, and is the great fountain and source of both light and heat to the natural world. As it is the fountain and source of all its properties, it may be considered as representing the eternal Father, who is the fountain of Deity, and the great original of all being. The light which issues from the sun, may be considered as representing the second person in the divine nature; for our Saviour is called *the light of the world*, and *the Sun of righteousness*; and the heat proceeding from the sun, and which accompanies the light, may be considered as representing the Holy

Spirit, the third person in the Divine Nature, who proceeds both from the Father and the Son, and gives light to the world. The light and heat both proceed from the sun. Unless the sun existed, there could not be either the one or the other.

“And on the other hand, if there is a sun in the firmament, there must be both light and heat ; for it is of the very nature of that vast body, to produce these two properties. So that the sun, light, and heat, are co-existent, they cannot be divided. As long as there is a sun, there must be its essential properties. The sun, indeed, is not the light, neither the heat, but it is the cause and source of both. They are all distinct, yet undivided. The sun depends not on the light, or heat, or both for its existence ; but yet it cannot be without them ; they are, as we said before, its essential properties ; and if it could be supposed to loose these properties, it would cease to be a sun.”*

Although these illustrations, may help us to conceive that three may be one and one three in different senses, yet they prove nothing ; we therefore appeal to the *law and the testimony* ; *If they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them.*

It has generally been considered sufficient in proving the doctrine of the Trinity, to establish the Divinity of Jesus Christ ; because those who admit a second person in the Godhead, can have no objection to the admission of a third. But we shall on the present occasion, take a different course, and consider the divinity of the second and third persons in the Godhead, and then prove a Trinity of persons in Unity, by such scriptural evidences as clearly recognise this doctrine.

The divinity of Jesus Christ, the second person in the Godhead, is abundantly established in a large number of passages, where he is expressly called God, and “in such a manner, as that according to the fair rules of interpretation, only the SUPREME GOD can be meant.” Thus John, i. 1, “*In the beginning was the word, and*

* Simpson's Deity of Christ, p. 29.

the word was with God, and the word was God." Rom. ix. 5, "Who is over all, God blessed forever, Amen." 1 John, v. 20, "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." John, xx. 28, "And Thomas said unto him, my Lord and my God." Heb. i. 8, "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne O God is forever and ever."*

These, are indeed, but a small part of the passages even in the New Testament, which assert the Supreme Godhead of Christ; but if there were no others, these are amply sufficient to establish the doctrine. For it should be remembered that the truth of a doctrine of revelation stands not on the number of passages which assert it; but on the explicitness of the word of God in relation to it. We do well, however, to observe, that the word JEHOVAH, which is so frequently applied to the supreme, self-existent God, and necessarily implies self-existence; is also in a great variety of places, applied to Jesus Christ.

For satisfaction on this point, I would refer you to the discourse upon the Supreme Deity of Jesus Christ, delivered before the New-England Conference, at Bath, Maine, June 1822; and which, if attentively perused, cannot fail to produce conviction on this head.

The same divine authority which establishes our faith in other respects, does it in this. We are taught by the scriptures to ascribe divine attributes to Jesus Christ, which could not be done, if he were not the Supreme God.

Omniscience is ascribed to Jesus Christ. He knows what is in man, he knows all things; and he reveals the Father to whomsoever he will.

Divine power is ascribed to Jesus Christ. The work of creating and upholding all things.

* The reasonings and criticisms by which the Supreme Deity of Christ is supported and defended in these and many other passages, may be found in Letters to Rev. W. E. Channing, by Rev. M. Stewart, of Andover.

Eternity is ascribed to Jesus Christ. He declares himself to be the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Rev. xxii. 13. He was in the beginning,—before all things,—before the foundation of the world. John, i. 1, and xvii. 24.

Divine honors and worship are ascribed to Jesus Christ. That all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. John, v. 23. Every knee shall bow to him of things in heaven and things on earth. Phil. ii. 10, 11. He is presented as the object of our prayers and praises. See Acts vii. 59, 60. 1 Cor. i. 2. Heb. i. 6. Rev. v. 8—14.

The same titles, attributes, and works are ascribed to the Holy Ghost, as are ascribed to the Father and the Son. This is clear from the consideration, that the same person who is called JEHOVAH by Moses, is by St. Paul called the Holy Ghost. “Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, to-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation, in the day of temptation, in the wilderness; when your fathers tempted *me*, proved *me*, and saw *my* works forty years.” Heb. iii. 7, 8. Let us compare this passage with the whole of the ninety-fifth Psalm, and it will be impossible for us to doubt that the Holy Ghost, in common with the Father and the Son, is our Maker and law-giver.

“O come, let us sing unto the *Lord*; let us make a joyful noise unto the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great king above all gods. In his hands are the deep places of the earth; the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his and he made it; and his hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness; when your fathers tempted *me*, proved *me*, and saw *my* works.

Forty years long was I grieved with *this* generation, and said, it is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways, unto whom I swear in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest."

The prophet Isaiah has given us a most sublime description of the Holy Ghost, or Spirit of the Lord. "Who," says he, "hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the SPIRIT OF THE LORD, or being *his* counsellor hath taught *him*? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed, and taught him in the path of judgment? Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof for a burnt offering. All nations before him are as nothing, and they are less than nothing and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God?" Isa. xl. 12—18. This description most evidently belongs to the Holy Ghost, or Spirit of the Lord, and proves him to be God in the highest sense. Again the same prophet says, speaking in the person of Christ, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek." Isa. lxi. 1, 2. Luke, iv. 18, 19. It is certain the Holy Ghost is here intended, not only from his peculiar title, *the Spirit of the Lord*, but from his office to anoint our holy Redeemer for his work.

By comparing Isaiah, lxiii. 10, 11, 14, with Deut. xxxii. 12, we shall have positive evidence that the Holy Ghost is Jehovah. The children of Israel "rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and fought against them. Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying, where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the Shepherd of his flock? Where is he that put his holy SPIRIT within him? As a beast goeth down into the valley, so

the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest." But it is said, "Jehovah *alone* did lead him, and there was no strange god with him." From this comparison, it is evident that the *Spirit of the Lord* is Jehovah, the self-existent God. By comparing two other passages we are led to the same conclusion. "They provoked the Most High in the wilderness, and tempted God in their hearts"—and "the Holy Ghost saith, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, and in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted *me*, and saw my works forty years." See Ps. lxxviii. 17, 18. Heb. iii. 7, 8. Compare also Jer. xxxi. 31—34. Heb. viii. 7, and ix. 8.—"Behold the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel; and with the house of Judah, &c.—After those days saith Jehovah I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God." The apostle says, "wherefore the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, this is the covenant that I will make with them, after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them. The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle was standing." From this comparison it is undeniably evident, that the person called Jehovah by the prophet, is by the apostle, called the Holy Ghost; not surely to the exclusion of the Father and the Son, but in common with them. Besides, in the text last quoted, the apostle refers the origin and authority of the whole Mosaic economy, to the Holy Ghost. "The Holy Ghost this signifying," &c.

Let any person without prejudice consider how the apostles conceived and spake of the Holy Ghost, and it will be impossible to doubt of his divinity. They considered lying to him, to be lying to God. "Wherefore hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." Acts v. 3, 4. They considered the Holy Ghost to be God when they

said, know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? Know ye not that ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost? Ye are the temple of the *living* God. 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17, and vi. 17, 20, and 2 Cor. vi. 16. In these passages we have the clearest testimony, asserting the divinity of the Holy Ghost; for if he were a mere creature, or gift only, he would not have made Christians his temple by dwelling in them. If they be the temple of God, because the Spirit dwells in them, then the Spirit is God. The Jewish temple, to which here seems to be an allusion, was a place of the most solemn worship of that God to whom it was dedicated, and whose residence it was. Believers being the temple of the Holy Ghost, are bound to worship him whose temple they are. The evidence for the divinity of the Holy Ghost, in the New Testament, is very full and clear; but for want of time we must omit much that would be edifying to the friends of this doctrine; we must, however, observe that the attributes of Deity are ascribed to the Holy Ghost.

He is called the eternal Spirit. Heb. ix. 14.

Omnipresence is ascribed to the Holy Ghost, since he is with Christians every where. John xv. 6.

Omniscience is ascribed to the Holy Ghost. He not only searcheth the heart of man, but knoweth, comprehendeth the things, the deep things of God. 1 Cor. ii. 11.

Sovereignty and independency are ascribed to the Holy Ghost. It is he who reproves, enlightens, renews, and sanctifies; it is he who wills, and works, commands, and requires obedience, as Supreme; and therefore we acknowledge him to be God, with the Father and the Son, and worship him as God.

This point will receive additional light, while we consider a number of scripture evidences, which clearly recognise the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity.

We agree with all Christians, in every age of the world, that there *is none other God but one*.

Let us now examine the Scriptures and see how this one God has spoken of himself. As he has spoken of

himself, so ought we to speak of him likewise. And why do we speak of three persons in the Godhead? Not because we find them in the Athanasian creed; but because the scriptures have revealed that there are three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, to whom the divine nature and attributes are given. If we admit the Unity of the Divine Nature, we must admit the Trinity of persons in Unity, for the scriptures have asserted both the one and the other.

To begin with the evidences from the Old Testament. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the *Spirit* of God moved upon the face of the waters." Gen. i. 1, 2. This important passage of holy writ, as well as many others, contains some important information in the original language, which does not appear in our translation. "The Hebrew name so often used in the *Old Testament*, which we have translated by the word *God*, is *Elohim*, a noun substantive of the *plural* number, regularly formed from its singular, and very frequently joined with plural verbs and adjectives, to express a plurality of persons in the divine nature."*

Should it be inquired of what number of persons does this plurality consist? We answer, that two are most evidently mentioned in the context, the Father and the Holy Spirit. And as the work of creation is frequently ascribed to Jesus Christ in the New Testament, we have the ever blessed Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, concerned in the original creation of the world. "And when Moses made use of a plural noun for the name of God, which he does thirty times in the short history of the creation, and perhaps five hundred times more in one form or other in the five first books of his writings; we apprehend it was to give some hints and intimations of a doctrine more fully to be revealed in after ages."†

* Jones on the Trinity, p. 131.

† See Simpson's Deity of Christ, p. 354.

We pass over a multitude of passages of the character of those above referred to, and notice that the prophet Isaiah, "Saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and heard the Seraphim cry, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts." "Also I heard," says he, "the voice of the Lord, saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, here am I, send me. And he said, go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." Isaiah vi. 1, 3, 8, 9, 10. Origen, a learned Christian father, says, "They are not contented to say it *once* or *twice*, but take the perfect number of the Trinity, thereby to declare the manifold holiness of God, which is a repeated intercommunion of a threefold holiness; the holiness of the Father, the holiness of the Son, and the holiness of the Holy Ghost." This ascription of holiness being thus three times repeated is supposed to belong to the three persons in the divine nature. The Lord mentioned in the beginning must be acknowledged by all to belong to the Father. John the evangelist applies it to Christ. "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him; that the saying of the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled,—he hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." John xii. 37—40. St. Paul applies the same passage to the Holy Ghost. "Well spake the Holy Ghost by the prophet Isaiah unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand," &c. Acts xxviii. 25—27. Here we clearly discover by comparing the prophet, the evangelist, and the apostle, that the *one* Jehovah in the first is a *trinity* of persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

‘The Trinity in Unity is the *one Lord*, the *Creator* of the universe.’

“By the WORD of the LORD were the heavens made and all the hosts of them by the *breath* (Heb. Spirit) of his mouth.” Ps. xxxiii. 6. Therefore, the Trinity created the universe; yet this Trinity is but *one Lord*; for it is said by the prophet Isaiah, “I am the LORD that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens ALONE, that spreadeth abroad the earth BY MYSELF.” Isaiah xlv. 24. It must here follow, that the *Word* and Spirit did not make the heavens; or, that the *Father*, with the *Word*, and the *Holy Spirit*, are the *alone Lord* and Creator of all things.

Passing over much proof for the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity in the Old Testament, we shall notice a few evidences from the New, refer to some others, and make some general observations upon the whole.

‘The divine *law* is called the *law of God*. “I myself serve the law of God.” Rom. vii. 25. It is called the *law of Christ*. “Fulfil the law of Christ.” Gal. vi. 2. And “*The law of the Spirit of life*.” Rom. viii. 2. But we are instructed, James iv. 12, “that there is ONE LAW GIVER who is able to save and to destroy.” Therefore the divine law, is the *law of God*, of *Christ*, and of the *Spirit of life*; and also these three are one.

‘Again, a transgression of the divine law is an offence committed against the undivided authority of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. It is said, Matt. iv. 7, “Thou shalt not *tempt* the Lord thy God;” and 1 Cor. v. 9, “Neither let us *tempt* Christ;” and Acts v. 9, “How is it that ye have agreed together to *tempt* the Spirit of the Lord.”’

Again, John, vi. 45, “They shall all be *taught* of God.” Gal. i. 2, “Neither was I *taught* it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ,” and John, xiv. 26, “The Comforter—the Holy Spirit,—will teach you all things.” From these passages it is clear that the great Teacher of mankind is the Trinity in Unity.

Once more, ‘from the following passages it appears,

that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was raised from the dead by the power of the ever blessed Trinity in Unity. 1 Cor. vi. 14, "God hath *raised up* the Lord, and will also raise us up by his *own power*." John ii. 19, "Destroy this temple, and in three days, *I will raise it up*;" and 1 Peter, iii. 18, it is said of Christ, that "being put to death in the flesh," he was "*quickened by the Spirit*."'

In all these, and a multitude of other passages, the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity is explicitly recognised. But if it were otherwise, we have two kinds of evidence which sufficiently establish it: We refer to our baptism, and to the form of apostolic benediction. The former is to be performed in the name of the "Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Here appears the most perfect equality in the persons of the Trinity. The Son is equal to the Father, and the Holy Ghost to the Son. The Father is not greater than the other two. Equality must be admitted here, not only because it *appears* on the face of the commission to baptize; but because it would be absurd indeed to pretend to derive a commission to baptize from three persons, when only one possessed the competent authority to commission. Besides, if the Son and the Holy Ghost are inferior to Deity, it would be offering an infinite offence to the latter to place them on a par with him.

Upon the supposition that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are not a Trinity of persons in Unity, the most shocking consequences will result from the baptized being devoted in their baptism, to the persons in whose names they are baptized. This would be palpable idolatry—idolatry too enjoined, authorized, and commissioned by Jesus Christ, and practised by all real Christians.

The same general reasoning will hold upon the form of benediction, as that of baptism. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." 2 Cor. xiii. 14. Here equality in the persons is the first thing that

strikes the mind. The blessings asked, are each the peculiar gift of God, and resulting from the offices of the sacred three, in man's salvation. If we say the Father is God, because he is religiously invoked, and because the blessing of God alone can be of any use to Christians; we are compelled to say that the Son is God, and that the Holy Ghost is God also, precisely for the same reasons. And how absurd would this form of blessing appear upon any other supposition than that of a Trinity of persons in Unity. Suppose, as the enemies of this doctrine contend, that Jesus Christ is a created being, and that the Holy Ghost is nothing more than an operation of Deity, and at once the absurdity is obvious. Here is confusion and idolatry. A *creature* and an *operation* are placed on an equality with God, and the ministers of the gospel, acting under the authority of apostolic example solemnly invoking, and blessing their congregations in the name of *God*, and of a *creature*, and of an *operation*. The absurdity and blasphemy of this supposition is too shocking to admit of our dwelling longer upon it on so serious an occasion.

From the arguments adduced in support of the doctrine of the Trinity, we proceed to make some general observations upon them, in further confirmation of the doctrine.

1. There is a remarkable interchange of names, titles, and offices, between the persons of the Trinity, which greatly confirms this doctrine. Although the sacred three are generally known and distinguished from each other by the appellations of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or, by Lord, and God,—for the first person; Christ, Jesus Christ, or Redeemer, for the second; and Holy Ghost, Spirit of God, and the Spirit of the Lord, for the third; yet this order is not always observed in speaking of them. The Son, the second person, is sometimes, and frequently, called God, the Creator or Maker, the Lord or Jehovah; and the Holy Ghost, is called, God, Jehovah and Lord. Now this could not be the case, were there not a unity of nature and an equality

of persons subsisting in the Godhead. We may also observe, that the same order is not always observed in speaking of the persons of the Trinity; for though the Father has generally the precedence in this order, yet sometimes the Son, and sometimes the Holy Ghost is placed first in this order.

2. We may observe with what ease and freedom the inspired writers treat this high and fearful subject—not indeed with want of reverence; for their souls are often overwhelmed with awe, and their bodies, prostrated before this glorious Being, this Triune Majesty. At the same time the subject appears to have been perfectly familiar to their minds. They every where approach it, not with cautious steps, as though entering on a new and dangerous path. They tell us there is but one God, and yet speak of three sacred persons, ascribing the names, titles, and attributes of Deity to each, without any apparent anxiety lest they should be misunderstood or thought inconsistent with themselves. They dwell upon the subject, asserting it in a great variety of expressions, without any attempt to explain, or to make the thing credible or agreeable to unbelievers. They speak of the persons of the Trinity with as much familiarity and ease as they mention Moses and Aaron, Caleb and Joshua, or David and Jonathan.

3. The office which each person in the Trinity sustains in the business of our salvation, marks him as a sovereign and independent Being. The Father forgives and justifies. The Son redeems; lays down his life himself; has life in himself, and gives life to whomsoever he will. And he must be God to have in himself the right to lay down his life, and to perform a meritorious obedience for us. The Holy Ghost also acts as a sovereign, independent Being, when he commands and requires obedience; when he enlightens the human mind and leads into all truth; when he reveals the Father and the Son, and witnesseth with our spirits that we are accepted of God in Christ Jesus; when he calls, qualifies, and inspires prophets and apostles to declare the

will of God, and to foretel future and distant events; and when, by his influence and agency, he renovates and governs the moral world. And though in these offices neither of the persons in the Trinity acts exclusive of the others; yet it is easy to see that each acts as a sovereign and independent Being.

We must close this discourse, which has already been long, by two or three reflections upon the doctrine of the Trinity.

1. What a glorious display of the character and perfections of Deity does the doctrine of the Trinity afford! How much more of God is known, than could, to our apprehensions, have been known had we seen him only in one person? In that case we should never have contemplated him in the endearing relation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; nor do we see how we could have ever known him as our Mediator, Justifier and Sanctifier. It has been the opinion of some that a plurality of persons in the Divine Nature is necessary that God may contemplate and know himself; we are not prepared at present to assert this; but we readily acknowledge that the society of persons in the Godhead, if we may use the expression, is of importance to us, and has the happiest effects upon our minds. By reason of this society in the Godhead, we see how God can be just, and the justifier of the ungodly,—how he can retain the majesty and glory of the Law-giver, and at the same time extend pardon to the transgressor. We hear them as it were, consulting respecting the recovery of a fallen world. It is mutually agreed that the glory of the Law-giver shall be sustained by the Father, and mercy offered to the transgressors. In order to this, the second person becomes the *Mediator* between God and man; while the Holy Ghost anoints him for his work, with the plenitude of his nature and influence, and succeeds him upon earth, dwelling in, and purifying the hearts of the obedient, that they may be prepared to dwell with God forever.

In these sublime representations we have such a display of the divine character as we probably never could have had in any other way.

“ Here the whole Deity is known ;
Nor dares a creature guess,
Which of the glories brightest shone ;
The justice or the grace.”

Yes, the whole Deity is known. He who was in the bosom of the Father became flesh, and dwelt among men, that he might reveal him to us. In this way the divine manifestations are brought down to our capacities, adapted to the exigences of fallen creatures, and produce the happiest results. The divine indignation against sin is illustrated and confirmed ; while we see truth and justice in harmony with the tender compassion and mercy of God ; and the whole forms the most wonderful display of benevolence that men or angels ever saw. We may now exultingly sing, “ Mercy and truth are met together ; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth ; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good—Righteousness shall go before him, and shall set us in the way of his steps.” Ps. lxxxv. 10—13. “ Glory to God in the highest—on earth peace, and good will to men.”

“ To God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, Three in One,
Be everlasting glory given,
By all on earth, and all in heaven.”

2. What a blank would be made in the inspired volume were we to strike out the doctrine of the Trinity. A very considerable part of that blessed book is taken up in descriptions of the persons, the names, the offices, the attributes, and the works of the Trinity. To strike out all these things would not only make a blank in the Bible ; but would make it a very different book from what it now is.

3. But what an incalculable loss should we sustain to have this doctrine taken from the Bible ! And it is the

same in effect to deny the doctrine, or by false explanations to give a different meaning to those passages which assert it. In this way the personality, or at least the divinity of Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost are expunged from our creed, and it is the same as though they had never been.

If this doctrine be denied, or explained away, the doctrine of the incarnation, atonement, renewal, sanctification and comfort by the personal operations of the Holy Ghost, fall to the ground, and all those scriptures which speak on these points and others connected with them become nugatory. In this case the gospel loses its power and commanding influence over the hearts of men, and sinks to the level of those systems of moral ethics which the mere light of nature suggests. We might then write upon every page, *Ichabod*, the glory is departed.

We say not these things without evidence. Look at those individuals, and at those churches, which deny the doctrine of the Trinity—Where will you find instances of sound conversion to God among them! Do they not in most instances, look upon atonement as unnecessary, and lightly treat the whole subject of Christian experience? If motives of worldly interest do not reform the vicious, they remain unreformed, while all are taught to trust in themselves, and not in the merits of Christ for salvation. And we know how inefficient are such motives and such preaching.

Not only so, but all the real comfort and happiness of the Christian is built upon and connected with the doctrine of the Trinity. A view of God *in Christ* reconciled, affords him peace, a peace which

“Lays the rough paths of peevish nature even,
And opens in his soul a little heaven.”

How firm and calm, while he is built upon the Rock of a divine Almighty Saviour! How like his divine *Master* when the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him! What joy he finds flowing from the witness and fruits of the Spirit within

him! What encouragement to persevere and to devote himself wholly to the Lord his God, when he knows that the divine Comforter will lead him into all truth and help his infirmities! When he may ask and receive in the name of his Redeemer, that his joy may be full,—and when he is assured that whatever he shall ask the Father in the name of Christ shall be granted him.

Let us then, my brethren, hold fast our belief in the doctrine of the Trinity. Let us contend for this faith which was at first delivered unto the saints. Let us be jealous of every one who may tell us that this doctrine is too mysterious and intricate to be believed, and who would substitute a vain philosophy in its stead.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all, Amen.

NOTE.—The arguments in single commas, pages 24 and 25, are in substance from Jones on the Trinity.

J. A. M.



THE
MORALITY OF THE GOSPEL,
AND
THAT OF THE WORLD.

A SERMON

PREACHED IN TRINITY CHURCH, BOSTON,

ON

ASH WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, MARCH 1, 1865,

BY

FRANCIS WHARTON.



BOSTON:

PRESS OF GEORGE C. RAND & AVERY, 3 CORNHILL.

1865.

By the Will of MR. WILLIAM PRICE, it is, among other things, provided that a sermon should be preached on Ash Wednesday of each year, "upon the duty, usefulness, and propriety of fasting and abstinence, or upon repentance, or faith, or hope, or charity, or Christian morality." The following sermon was preached under the provisions of this Will, and is addressed to the latter of the foregoing points.

S E R M O N.



“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ; for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” — COLOSS. ii. 3.

THERE are dark caverns in which the absence of light operates to distort and exaggerate every growth. Crystallization, as if in delirium, assumes the wild and fitful forms of dreams. Plants lose their natural color and shape, and become pale and monstrous. Similar to this has been the effect on the mind of the rejection of the light of God. The patterns which we have set up to be followed, as well as the idols which we have created for worship, are false, morbid, and perverted. Let it be our duty to-day to analyze these, the several forms of the ideal of the natural mind, and then compare them with the true model and pattern given to us by God in the life and teaching of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I. The idol of the natural mind is *self*. Of self is erected an image which is at once a master and a model. It is not that self is conceived of as it actually is. It would be crushing to self-love for any one to look at himself in the light in which he stands be-

fore the world; the small space occupied; the few expectations made good; the indifference, if not contempt, with which he is regarded by those jostling in his path. No one chooses thus to look at himself. Instead of this, an imaginary self is created to be worshipped, and acted out. Let us notice one or two of the ways in which this is done.

The young man who looks forward to political life, for instance, views himself not as he is in fact. His failures in the politics of minor spheres; his weaknesses and inadequacies, — these he suppresses to gaze on the ideal his ambition paints. Rivals passed by; round after round of difficulties surmounted; popular applause ringing about him; history waiting to record his fame, — this character, eloquent, capable, and, above all, admired and obeyed, is the ideal before his eye.

Or take the struggler after wealth. In his imagination rises the quiet counting-room, in which sits one whose touch throbs through the whole mechanism of trade, and who — exulting, it is true, in the elegance of his home, the splendor of his charities, and the refinement of his patronage of the arts — rejoices still the more in that potent electricity which flows through his pen, enabling a few written words to sustain a war, or to exact a peace; to flush a country with triumph, or to palsy it in despair.

Or take the future of the literary idealist. His books, bent over and admired in the remote village, as well as in the metropolis; wealth coming in as billow after billow, with each succeeding edition; opponents silenced; rivals left behind; the height

of fame reached, and reached alone, — this is the future he creates.

And as this perverted nature of ours fabricates an ideal future, so it falsifies the present. The natural mind views the present only in the mirror of self-love. The rich man refuses to believe that it is *money* only that gives him power, but dwells with delight on merits to which he attributes the obeisance he receives and exacts. Even the unfortunate man conjures up imaginary wrongs and oppressions which he assumes he has suffered, and which he thinks entitle him to sympathy. In each case the imagination so arranges the accidents of life that they fall apart into avenues through which applause or support may reach *self*; by which self can be nurtured, pampered, worshipped, and others turned into subservients and pamperers. It is an ideal, which, even if successful, can only produce wretchedness and woe; for he who had made all others miserable as their conqueror would at last become miserable himself, from having none left to conquer. It is an ideal which brings out the worst, and destroys the holiest, principles of our nature; and which, through the whole course of our race, has sown grief and desolation in heart and home.

II. Such is the ideal of the world. But God has been pleased to give to our fallen race another standard, — that embodied in the life and character of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Let us approach this divine model with reverence, imploring aid to see it in its true light, so that, impressed with its beauty, we may seek to imitate it; impressed with the inadequacy of our

human powers for the work, we may seek converting grace from above.

1st, And first, consider *Christ's lofty beneficence*, as contrasted with the selfishness of human ambition. Man seeks to rise on the top of his fellows. The aim of the powerful and lordly has constantly been to press down the weak and ignoble into terraces on which the edifice of personal pre-eminence can be built.

Not so with the Lord Jesus. He reversed this process, and for himself accepted a servant's form, was born in a manger, toiled among the laborers in the work-shop, was subjected to all the coarse necessities of childhood in a working-man's home. He might have selected as his companions the cultivated, the wealthy, and the august; but he passed these, and grouped around him fishermen, and tillers of the soil, — men poor and illiterate, — men then unable to understand his sublime delicacy and grandeur, however much afterwards, from this very simplicity, they became capable of receiving and exhibiting the ennobling power of his grace. He thus took the brightest diadem the universe knew, and crowned with it, not wealth and power, but labor and poverty. The ideal of man is the depression of others, as the platform on which to elevate self: the ideal of Christ is the exaltation of all to the glorious humility of heaven.

Then observe how it was as to the standard of sympathy and taste. Man finds his ideal in the momentarily fashionable and superb, and to this adulation pays court. Yet how was it with Christ? Splendor and style held sway in his day, as well as in ours: with them he was often brought into close neighborhood;

but the only consciousness we find in him of their presence is sometimes a pathetic sorrow over those whom they misled, sometimes sublime denunciation of the sins they involved. Yet in him we find at once the sweetest susceptibility to the beauties of nature, and the tenderest sympathy with the affections of man. I know nothing that shows the *superhumanness* of his life more than this, that thus he combined the sympathy with the severity of piety; a harmony which it is not within human power to compass. Alas for us! in our religion, becoming cold and ascetic towards our fellow-men; in our worldliness, becoming unconscious of our God.

2d, Then observe the contrast as to *philosophy*. See (1) how this was as to *the range of persons addressed*. Before Christ came, philosophy had been handed down from teacher to scholar as a secret for the *few*. Even he, who was the profoundest as well as the lowliest of heathen philosophers,—he whose wisdom the natural heart now sets up as a rival for that of the gospel,—confined his teachings to the few, to the “select.” The vulgar herd were not to receive this sacred food; they must browse forever on their own gross fancies: only those rare souls who were emanations from the Most High were to be admitted to this divine repast. But not so taught Jesus of Nazareth. His wisdom was all-embracing. Before the creation of the world, it contemplated all times; and then, during his short and laborious ministry, he hurried to proclaim it to all races, classes, conditions. There was the word of warning to the rich and great; and there was the word of comfort and light to the

ignorant, the poor, and the obscure. "Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden," he hastened to say at the outset. "Blessed are the meek," "those that mourn," "the poor,"—as if he sprang forward at the first impulse of his all-loving heart to bring peace to those to whom others had only brought sorrow. Cases to a refined nature the most trying; those afflicted with frenzies the most fierce, with leprosies and sores the most repulsive,—these he brooded over with all the fulness of his pathetic love; spending among such, and among the coarse and ignorant, a large part of his time. Yet, even from *his* exquisite sensibilities, when is there a murmur, or shrinking from such labor? What other response than one of joy at thus beginning the gospel of comfort with those by whom comfort was most needed; of beginning it with them, to enlarge and expand until the whole world should be refined and subdued by his love?

So it was that he exalted into the region of sympathy, and instruction, and ennoblement, the wretched, the obscure, and the oppressed. The world's philosophy is aristocratic; Christ's is catholic: the world's, dealing in symbols comprehensible only by a few; Christ's, in symbols comprehensible by all: the world's, operating for the distinction of a school; Christ's, for the illumination of humanity. And observe the results. The world's philosophy has been repulsive; first deadening, and then sloughing off the layers of life farthest from self; corrupting, and then destroying, the remote, the oppressed, the alien: it is the philosophy of hate and ruin. But

Christ's philosophy, if we can call it such, is that of love, of refinement, of ennobling grace. It is the philosophy of comprehension and beneficence. His mission has been to lift up and bind together; it has moved on a fulcrum above mankind, to restore to man that peace and that grandeur which man had destroyed. Man's ideal is to concentrate eminence, whether intellectual or social, with a few, and to work those few into an aristocracy of intolerance and self-conceit; that of Christ, the inculcation, among all, of the sweetest humanities, and the widest truths, and the most catholic sympathies, our fallen race can receive.

(2) Then let us go a step farther, and, *passing from the range of persons addressed, take up the thing presented*, contrasting here also the ideal of man and that of Christ. Select this of morals as the loftiest subject on which philosophy can work, and observe how partial and fragmentary are the systems which human philosophy propounds. It would seem as if there were an inherent littleness about the mind's natural vision, which prevents it, at any one time, from apprehending more than one section of God's truth universal. Some great thinker lifts his telescope to the infinite skies, and views with rapture some particular constellation, thus insulated by him, in its single splendor; and with the enthusiasm of genius he describes this to his disciples, and to this constellation they do homage, as if it were the whole heavens of God. Thus it is that one small dependent section is accepted as if it were the whole; and so it has always been when man has followed the moral ideal

of man. Remember how it was in the time of Christ. Two schemes of philosophy had then, for generations, divided the schools; the first of which, the Stoic, imposed a severe rule of right, to be inexorably followed; all pleasure to be rejected; all elegance and refinement to be repelled; only the harder and more direct duties of life to be discharged. By the other, the Epicurean, the human will was deified, and ease, and affection, and refinement made the main objects of life. The Stoic forgot the nature of man; the Epicurean forgot the nature of God. The Stoic shut his eyes to human weakness; the Epicurean, to divine perfection. The Stoic absorbed man's individuality in God's omnipotence; the Epicurean absorbed God's omnipotence in man's individuality. The Stoic destroyed man's moral agency in God's sovereignty; the Epicurean destroyed God's sovereignty in man's moral agency. The one created as an ideal a perfectly divine man; the other as an ideal a perfectly human God. Such were the two schools which divided ethical philosophy before the advent of Christ; and such are the two schools that continue to divide that philosophy, when taught by men without the spirit of Christ. Each clasps one of the two buttresses of the bridge of eternal truth; yet by neither is the bridge of this truth spanned. Neither can comprehend either how God is to be brought down to man, or man lifted to God.

But by neither of these half truths, viewing them as thus independent, was the Lord Christ controlled. He alone united them into an harmonious whole: he alone has shown how God can be just, and yet the

Justifier; how God's eternal purpose and man's moral agency can agree; how the same divine Being, at once perfect man and perfect God, can bring us to God, and bring God to us; how, as an High Priest, Christ is to bear our sins; as a human friend, to be touched with our infirmities; as an Infinite God, to prescribe our path. And then, as our pattern, he has placed before us for imitation a life exhibiting a rule of holiness more severe than ever Stoic imposed, combined with a tenderness for humanity beyond that of the purest and gentlest of the Epicureans. For he who declared that even the most secret purpose of sin should receive the judgment; who directed that no treasure should be laid up on earth, and no thought taken for the morrow, — was not only he who laid down his life as a sacrifice for us, but, when on the earth, gave the sanction of his sympathy to all that remains of beauty in nature or man. No Stoic heart was it that sought repose in viewing the lily spreading its snowy cup in the meadow; and the ripe corn swelling and whitening in the harvest; and the birds of the air, each sheltered when wheeling through its invisible path by the providence of God. Nought but humanity in its tenderest form was it that sanctified the marriage-feast; that yearned over and blessed little children, when a colder wisdom would keep them back; which provided in the sorrows of the passion for the disciples' comfort, and in the agonies of death for a mother's home; which wept over the grave as it blessed the wedding; and which thus grieved with the sorrows, and rejoiced in the innocent pleasures, of man, while it laid down for him a perfect standard of

right. Neither of these two systems of human ethics made Christ its own; but he made each of them his, cementing them in one divine whole.

(3) Then observe this same catholicity in *the tone in which moral truth is presented*. Among the varied forms of religious temperament, none imparted its distinctive hue to Christ; each he has condescended to consecrate as a means of communion with himself. It needs only a superficial survey of men to see how widely in this matter of religious temperament they differ. To some mystic contemplation, to some constant practical work, is essential to devotion. Some lean by nature on a splendid ritual; others are more touched by the rudest forms of spontaneous worship. Some cling with absorbing tenderness to the forms of the past; others are most moved by the impulses of the present; others bend wistfully to the future, finding their light and radiance in the hope of the days to come. Neither of these phases of temperament possessed the Lord Christ; yet to each of them he appeals, and each he consecrates to himself. His was the mystic solitude on the mountain-side till the gray dawn crept over the skies, and his the communion of the night watches: yet his ministry was one of the homeliest, practical activity; was one of incessant labor, of long foot-journeys, of cool, keen, disengaged attention to each want that struck his eye, of prompt and appropriate relief, of exact and equally appropriate counsel. He worshipped often under no dome but that of heaven, and he worshipped in the Temple: he has given us a particular form of petition, of all others the most perfect in its simple comprehen-

siveness ; and he set the example of the most fervid and passionate secret prayer. On the past he dwelt with the deepest tenderness ; on the law, on the prophets, directing his disciples' reverence to a priesthood whose only claim was that of days gone by : yet he made the emergencies of the present his opportunities, and his human nature swelled with joy at Satan's future overthrow, and the final ennoblement of the redeemed race. And so, uncontrolled by either form of human temperament, he has condescended to bless and sanctify each of them to himself. He does not destroy these peculiarities of individual nature ; he does not equalize and assimilate them in one homogeneous type ; but, visiting them as they are, he condescends to draw each of them to himself. It is with him as with the portrait whose eyes meet and respond to the eyes of all turned to it ; he looking into the souls of all who gaze on him, whoever and wherever they may be on the face of this wide world. He is "CHRIST THE CONSOLER" to the recluse in the desert ; to the man of business in the turmoil and strain of his every-day life ; to the ecclesiastic in the cathedral's splendid ceremonial ; to the shepherd on the bleak hill ; to the pioneer on the plain ; to the man of the past, the present, and the future ; to men in all their varied conditions and estates, if they but turn to him. Sinful men in this mortal life are, and always will be, infinitely varied in their tastes and temperaments ; but Christ comes as a Saviour to all ; each finding harmony in him, he planting a one common, supreme truth in each. Qualified and controlled by no form of religious temperament, he qualifies and draws

all to himself, — he the one sole being who ever trod the earth; who teaches not partial truth, but the whole; who is not national, but universal; not of one time, but of all times; not one, but all; not the creature of side lights and influences, but the ONE GOD-MAN, unmoulded by any age, country, and world, yet occupying all.

(4) Then, again, apply this contrast to the *attitude in which moral truth is to be received*. Remember how feebly and partially man responds to his moral convictions, and how constantly he subordinates them to prevalent wrongs and prejudices of time and place. Who, even among the noblest of mortals, has not exhibited the corrupting influence of that vanity which welcomes praise, or that sensitiveness which recedes under censure? But follow the history of Christ, and observe how it was with him. On the one hand, we find that the multitude that desired to praise him were left for the solitude of the mountain; and wonders were refused, when wonders were sought for the purpose of making him king. So, on the other hand, his sublime purpose was unswerved by the hatreds and irritations of men, — by the irritations, perhaps, often most trying; for the human heroism, which stands out serene in the public gaze, frets and quivers at the annoyances of obscurity. The eagle that flinched not at the wreck of an army on the Russian snows, cowered and winced at the vexations of St. Helena. Of all the sad sides of our fallen nature, the meanness of greatness is the saddest. He who walks calmly to martyrdom loses his calmness at some petty prejudice, or annoying ignorance, among his friends;

and the great theologian or the wise statesman, who faced danger with such brave and true brow, sullies his last days by some act of petulance among his dependants. But approach the Redeemer, and see how his divine majesty shows itself in little trials, as well as in great; amid the coarse and sordid misconceptions of his friends, as well as in the awful consummation of his cross and passion. There a man unfriended, and yet with the divinest gifts and endowments; one who, with every claim on love and veneration, is a despised and rejected wanderer; one who, of the most delicate susceptibilities, is yet often weary, faint, and buffeted; this MAN, JESUS CHRIST, this our Lord and Saviour, meets, on the one hand, the apathy and desertion of his friends with patient love, and the insults of his enemies with sublime composure. Ready he may be to perish at man's hand, but never to cower to man's wrong; omnisciently gazing on his ministry's tragic end, yet quietly each hour discharging its humblest as well as its grandest offices; arising at Gethsemane from conflicts at which even divinity shuddered, to a sublime devotion to the right which divinity alone could assume. Man's loyalty to the truth is that of the ignorant, vain, and fluctuating creature; Christ's, that of him who is himself at once all truth and light.

(5) Then from this we may rise to consider the contrast between the *motive power to morals supplied by the world and that supplied by Christ*. Man's ideal of motive power is *law*; Christ's is *love*. Remember in comparing the two that law is, in its nature, a restraint on the natural will; saying, "Thou shalt not do

that which thou dost wish, or thou shalt do that which thou wishest not." It is, therefore, a battle and a bondage. It marshals the will's wild power in perpetual warfare with an odious external yoke. But love is an inner energy, absorbing and uniting with itself the most secret purposes of the heart; so that the whole nature, in sweet accord, cries, "I will."

Then, again, law is superficial, and deals with observances. It says, "Perform this or that ceremony, submit to this or that outer discipline." It tends to make religion, therefore, a superstition; to turn it to the slavish performance of rites, and the idolizing of symbols; and this with a heart unspiritual and rebellious. But love deals with the essence, and elevates the whole nature to the obedience and worship of God.

Then law works but for the moment. Its labor is like that which placed for a day, along the desert over which the Russian empress travelled, transplanted and rootless trees, to be removed when the procession passed by; so that the next morning the landscape was as sterile and unadorned as before. Law puts up for the moment's use, upon the sterile soil of an unchanged heart, the rootless foliage of virtue; but soon, when the occasion passes, this foliage is removed, or dies out. But love, though working more slowly, sows a divine growth, which draws its support from the heart itself, and which continues while eternity lasts. Law cannot fit for heaven, for it only sticks the semblance of heaven's principles on the outside; but love does fit for heaven, for it plants those principles within. Law may cage up the of-

fender, but it cannot change his nature. It may bring him to the scaffold, but it cannot reform his life. As it can only supply the outer appearance, so it can only repress the outer act: it has neither fetter nor axe to affect the immortal soul. But love frees not merely from sin as a tempter, but from the law as a bondage. It liberates, it ennobles, it assimilates the creature in his sympathies and desires with the all-holy God.

And then, once again, law leaves the offender in despair, under the burden of unreduceable and accumulating guilt. It says, "You broke the law, and for that these penalties are assigned;" and so on through irremediable transgression and measureless condemnation. But love says, "All this was cancelled by the cross. Christ fulfilled this law perfectly for you; Christ suffered its penalties fully for you, that you may arise and obey it for yourself." To one oppressed by the law's weight there is no motive, for there is no hope of removing the sentence of condemnation to which each day's new transgression adds. But love gives hope and strength; and in the atonement of the Saviour, and the sureness of his grace, supplies the stimulus and the power of a new and holy life. Law immures the eternal spirit in the grave of hopeless sin; love graces it with a saint's pardon, and wings it with a seraph's strength, and speeds it to God's own home.

Having thus, brethren, shown the contrast between the sinful and sin-spreading ideal of the unconverted heart, and the sublime, beneficent, and

sinless model given to us in Christ Jesus, let me put two closing questions.

In the first place, can you see in this character of the Redeemer any thing underneath divine power? Is not that character a miracle in itself, proving that in Jesus dwells not the meagreness of human philosophy, but the "*fulness of God*"? What think ye of Christ? What answer can there be but this: "God-sent was Jesus of Nazareth; divinely true must have been the words he spoke"? Find in him, then, O sinner, thy Saviour; in him, O mortal, thy God!

And then, finally, when you thus contrast the ideal of the natural heart and the model we thus gather from the word of God; when you see how the philosophy and vain deceit, and the rudiments of the world, differ from the eternal gospel of Christ; when you remember the wretchedness which is produced by the one, and the peace which flows from the other; when you see, at the same time, how impossible is the second to our unrenewed nature; how but one ever attained to it, and *he* the Lord Jesus; how, on the other hand, the first, this ideal of the world's philosophy, is inwrought into our very essence; consider how divine must be the power by which this nature can be changed, and God's gospel established in the heart. But "*in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*;" and in union with him by faith descends this converting power on man.



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A

DISCOURSE,

COMMEMORATIVE OF THE

REV. SAMUEL MILLER, D. D.,

LATE PROFESSOR IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

AT PRINCETON,

DELIVERED IN THE

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ALBANY,

ON

SABBATH EVENING, JANUARY 27, 1850.

BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.,

MINISTER OF SAID CHURCH.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE SESSION AND TRUSTEES OF THE CHURCH.

ALBANY:

ERASTUS H. PEASE & CO.

1850.

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TO THE
REVEREND PROFESSORS
IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AT PRINCETON,
THIS DISCOURSE,
DESIGNED TO TESTIFY OF THE
GIFTS AND GRACES,
THE EXALTED WORTH AND EMINENT USEFULNESS,
OF THEIR LATE HONOURED,
AND NOW LAMENTED, COLLEAGUE,
IS RESPECTFULLY
AND AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

DISCOURSE.

II. KINGS II, 12.

My father, my father !

It was a scene of incomparable tenderness and sublimity that drew forth this pathetic and reverent exclamation. A man of mark, well known in all Israel, venerable for character and office, had now just accomplished his mission on the earth. The grave had waited for him, as it waits for other men; but God, by a splendid miracle, disappointed it. Death, which has passed upon all men, came not upon him; for the Heavens opened, and the veteran was changed in the act of going up. Many a grateful and wondering eye was fastened upon him, as he took passage in his chariot of fire and rode majestically in the whirlwind. But there was one individual who sustained a more intimate relation to him than the rest; — who was not only his disciple, but destined to be his successor in the prophetic office; who finally inherited his mantle, and with it a double portion of his

spirit. It seems to have been Elijah's wish that there should be no witnesses of his glorious departure, other than the celestial company who had him in charge ; but Elisha, who had been divinely apprized of what was about to happen, resisted the repeated and importunate requests of his master to leave him alone, and actually stood by his side, when the Heavens bowed to receive him. Can imagination paint a more sublime or surprising scene than was there exhibited ! Two prophets, an elder and a younger, a teacher and his pupil, are holding their last conference upon earth, and anticipating the splendid termination to which a few moments will bring it ; while many sons of the prophets to whom the secret has been disclosed, have stationed themselves on the distant hills to catch a glimpse of the wonderful transaction. And now the chariot of fire and the horses of fire have appeared ; and the whirlwind is there too ; and Elijah has started upon his upward course, leaving nothing but his mantle and his example behind him. "MY FATHER ! MY FATHER !" exclaims the astonished Elisha. It was an expression of reverence ; for he honoured him as not only an eminent prophet, but an eminent saint. It was an expression of gratitude ; for he recognized in him a faithful friend, a wise teacher, a beneficent patron. It

was an expression of grief; for how could such a man be spared from Israel, when his labours were so much needed to stem the current of idolatry and corruption.

The history of Elijah is not very minutely given; and yet enough is recorded to show that he was eminently favoured in both his character and his life. He was evidently a man of superior natural powers: his movements were marked by a force and majesty which bespeak something above the common mind. He was richly endowed with both the ordinary and extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit. He lived at a period which demanded, while it was fitted to awaken, vigorous impulses in the cause of reformation. He was not only a prophet, but an associate of prophets, and of other great and good spirits of his time. He performed services for Israel which must render his name a household word in the church throughout all generations. And last of all, when he had finished his course, he was excused from taking the common dark passage to Heaven: without feeling the death-struggle,—without casting off, by the ordinary process, the garments of mortality, he became at once instinct with immortal life, and took his place in the shining ranks of the glorified.

This exclamation of Elisha, as he gazed after his ascending master, is, I doubt not, a faithful expression of the feelings of a large portion of the church in this land, on hearing that the venerable and beloved Doctor Miller is no more. Many a useful minister whose character his instructions and example have helped to form; and many a private christian who has experienced the quickening and edifying influence of his labours both in the pulpit and through the press; and many a missionary who has gone to live and die on Pagan ground, to whom he used to speak words of encouragement as well as of instruction;—aye, and many of the great and good of other nations, who never saw his face, but have learned to venerate his character in his works;—these, constituting an innumerable multitude, have felt or have yet to feel, the sentiment of mingled reverence and sorrow, in contemplating his departure. You will not, therefore, I am persuaded, think it inappropriate that I endeavour to present before you some estimate of his character and services. In doing this, though I cannot forget that I am paying a tribute to the memory of an honoured instructor and beloved friend, yet I am chiefly influenced by considerations not of a personal nature; particularly by the fact that he has, for almost sixty years, occupied some of the

highest places of influence and honour in our denomination, and has been a professor in our Theological seminary, during the whole period of its existence. I may advert too without indelicacy to the circumstance that the occasion that brought you and me into the sacred relation we bear to each other, was honoured by his presence and services; and the edifying counsels which he delivered to us then, still remain among us as a monument of his devotion to the best interests of the church.

I have said that Elijah was eminently favoured in his life and character; and I am sure that I may, without the fear of contradiction, say the same of our venerable friend. It is not my design to institute a formal parallel between the two; and yet the view which I shall necessarily be led to take of the one, can scarcely fail to remind you of some traits in the character, and some events in the history, of the other.

I. Our departed father was eminently favoured in respect to *original constitution and educational influences*.

His mind was distinguished rather for that admirable harmonious blending of all the faculties, which generally secures the highest amount of usefulness, than for the striking predominance of some one quality, which often attracts more

notice and admiration. You could not say that he was deficient in any faculty; you could not say that he exceeded all others in any; but you could say that he exceeded most others in the symmetry and completeness of the intellectual man. His perceptions, if not remarkably quick, were remarkably clear; he hated intellectual as well as moral darkness, and knew how to distinguish between profound investigation and the wild sallies of an ambitious and dreamy philosophy. He had a ready and retentive memory, in which were carefully treasured the results of his study and observation. He had a sound, discriminating judgment, which never leaped in the dark, and usually reached its conclusions by a legitimate process. If his imagination was not strikingly prolific, his taste was uncommonly exact; and every effort of the former was subject to the rigid control of the latter. He possessed in a high degree that admirable quality, — common sense; which is so eminently a discerner of times and seasons, and which, even in the absence of what are usually considered the higher intellectual endowments, may be a security for an honourable and useful life. He had an unusually safe mind; a mind that moved luminously, effectively, yet cautiously; — a mind that you could trust amidst agitating and even convulsive scenes, and not be

afraid to read the report of its opinions or decisions. I remember to have heard that the celebrated Dr. Joseph Priestley was much struck with the character of his mind, while Dr. Miller was yet a very young man; and little as he sympathized in his views of Christian doctrine, predicted that, if his life were spared, he would attain to great eminence in his profession.

But we must view the intellectual in connection with the moral, if we would do justice to the character of his mind; though it may be difficult here to draw the line between what was originally conferred by the Creator and what was superinduced by education or even by grace. But I think all who knew him will admit that he was constituted with a large share of benevolent feeling. It shone in his countenance; it breathed from his lips; it found expression in his bland and kindly manner. Still he had a strong natural sense of right and wrong; and when he was deeply impressed with the idea of evil doing, he could sometimes utter himself in solemn and indignant rebuke. Though he was prudent and conciliatory in his intercourse with men, I never heard him charged, even in a whisper, with any unworthy concealment; with aiming to reach his end by a designedly circuitous or equivocal course; with seeming to be intent on the accomplishment of one object,

while his efforts were really directed towards another. Nor do I believe that he was justly chargeable with any lack of firmness, — however his christian courtesy and love of peace may have sometimes carried him to what some would regard an extreme of forbearance or lenity. His firmness certainly never degenerated into obstinacy, but existed as a twin sister to that charity which thinketh no evil, and which hopeth all things; nevertheless he felt his convictions strongly, and valued them highly, and adhered to them in all cases which he deemed important, with unwavering fidelity.

Dr. Miller's person, though not above the middle size, was uncommonly symmetrical and dignified. His countenance spoke in no equivocal language of the benignity and generosity of his spirit. His manners were the simple reflection of the fine qualities of his intellect and heart. He might pass you in the street as a stranger, and yet you could not fail to recognize in him the polished gentleman. Perhaps his rigid regard to all the forms of polite society, so far as they were justified to his conscience and sense of propriety, gave to his manners an air of more than common precision; but there was nothing that was designed to inspire awe, or fitted to produce embarrassment. Always self-possessed and per-

fectly at ease, and on all suitable occasions cheerful and abounding with anecdote, he was welcome to every circle; while yet he never forgot, or suffered others to forget, the decorum that was due to his character and office. Persons of every age and profession, the oldest and the youngest, the most intelligent and the least informed, were edified by his wisdom, entertained by his humour, and charmed by his bland and attractive address.

We must look now at these admirable developments in connection with the influences by which they were mainly secured. Dr. Miller was the son of an excellent clergyman of Scotch extraction, who was born and educated and ordained in Boston, but spent nearly his whole active life in the State of Delaware. His mother who was a native of Maryland, was a lady of rare accomplishments and high moral qualities. The first unfolding of his mind, therefore, must have been under the most auspicious influences. At a suitable age he was sent to the University of Pennsylvania, where he enjoyed excellent advantages, while, at the same time, he had access to the best society of Philadelphia. Having gone through the prescribed course at the University, he commenced the study of theology under his venerable father; and subsequently, after his father's death,

put himself under the instruction of the celebrated Dr. Nisbet, then President of Dickinson College, Carlisle. I need not say that, from the time he commenced his ministry, his situation in life was, in the highest degree, favourable to the culture of his various faculties. His opportunities for study, for reflection, for general improvement, were perhaps scarcely exceeded by those of any individual of his day.

II. Our departed friend was greatly distinguished by his *Christian attainments*.

The foundation of his religious character was laid in a deep, reverential and abiding sense of the importance of divine truth. What his views of the doctrines of the gospel were, is sufficiently indicated by the fact that he was honestly and thoroughly a Presbyterian: he received the Confession of Faith in its legitimate and obvious import; while, at the same time, he regarded the Bible as the ultimate standard, and revered the former only because he thought it conformed to the latter. Redemption by the Blood and Spirit of Christ he considered as the cardinal doctrine of Christianity, — the central point of its glory, — the leading element of its power. He studied the Bible earnestly, constantly, not merely as a source of theological knowledge, but especially as a means of spiritual culture; and

no doubt it was under this influence chiefly, that his spiritual life became so vigorous and all his graces so mature.

He possessed, in a high degree, the devotional spirit. No one could hear him pray without being struck with the humble, grateful, child-like temper that marked his supplications. There was a reverent freedom, an elevated fervour, in his approaches to the throne of grace, which showed that he was engaged in his favourite employment; and we felt that the fire which was burning so brightly in the lecture-room or the sanctuary, had been kindled in the closet. It was not necessary that one should be personally acquainted with his private religious habits, to feel perfectly assured that he was eminently a man of prayer; for his public devotional services proved it, as truly as the shining of Moses' face proved that he had been on the Mount. And what he exemplified so well in his own character, he affectionately and impressively urged upon others, and especially upon his pupils. Many a student can testify that the last interview which his revered professor held with him, previous to his leaving the seminary, was concluded by his offering up a fervent prayer that God's blessing might attend him in all coming time, and throughout a coming eternity.

Dr. Miller was distinguished by a benevolent spirit, in connection with a well directed christian activity. I have already said that he possessed a large share of *natural* benevolence; but I refer here to that higher quality which is one of the fruits of the Spirit, and is habitually controlled and directed by christian principle; and of this, I may safely say, he was a bright example. He walked constantly in the footsteps of Him who went about doing good. He watched for opportunities to do good;—good to the bodies and souls of men;—good to those near at hand and to those afar off. Without very ample pecuniary means, he was still a liberal contributor to the various objects of christian benevolence that solicited his aid; and, in some instances, I know that he volunteered the most unexpected and generous benefactions. His benevolence, however, did not reserve itself for signal occasions; but was manifested in his daily intercourse with society and in connexion with all the little affairs of life. Indeed he seemed always to be acting in obedience to the impulses of christian good will; and if an opportunity presented to confer innocent pleasure, much more substantial benefit, upon any of his fellow creatures, even the humblest,—provided no paramount interest required his at-

tention, he deemed it an occasion not unworthy of his consideration and his efforts.

It was one great advantage that he possessed above many other good men, that his christian life was ordered with the strictest regard to system. His purposes of good were formed, and his means of accomplishing them arranged, so as to occasion no perplexing interference. You would often find him greatly pressed with engagements which, with his feeble health and advanced age, he scarcely felt adequate to meet; but you would never find him thrown into an inextricable maze and not knowing what to do next, for want of due forethought and calculation. It was surprising to many that he accomplished so much, in various ways, in his last years: the secret of it was that he worked to the full measure of his strength and did every thing by rule.

It was the natural result of his uncommon regard to system, in connection with his strict conscientiousness about even the smallest matters, that he was remarkably punctual in fulfilling his engagements. He made engagements cautiously, and generally subjoined the condition, — “if the Lord will”; but when once made, they were as sacred as an oath. I have myself recently had experience of this trait in his character in a way which has awakened at once my gratitude

and admiration. Sometime ago I had occasion to ask of him certain services which I deemed important, and a part of which none but himself could render. He answered me with his usual kindness, expressing a wish to do what I had asked, and an intention to do it if his waning strength should permit; but would not absolutely promise, lest he should disappoint me. The result was that, from time to time, as he felt able, he tasked himself to comply with my request; and one of the latest efforts of his pen was to finish what he had not dared to promise that he would even undertake.

He was remarkable for self control,—for the subjection of his appetites and passions to the dictates of reason and religion. He was proverbially temperate in all things; and during many of his latter years, from a regard to his own health as well as the influence of his example, he scrupulously abstained from all intoxicating drinks. The passion of anger no doubt belonged to his constitution; I think I have seen it once or twice flash in his countenance; but I never heard of its blazing forth in bitter or unseemly expressions. On the other hand, I have known of his sustaining himself in dignified tranquillity, when most other good men would have been wrought into a fever of excitement; and I have heard him utter kind

and forgiving words, when he had been the object of marked personal indignity. An instance which I can never forget, occurred in one of my last interviews with him; in which he took special pains to give me a favourable opinion of a man who, I knew, had done him an injury; and when I adverted to the fact, he acknowledged it, but added, — “He was a good man notwithstanding.” In short, he was a noble example of christian magnanimity. You saw reflected in his whole life the true greatness of religion.

III. The man whose death we lament, *enjoyed unusual opportunities for doing good*; — opportunities connected with both the period in which he lived and the places he was called to occupy.

There are no circumstances in which you can place a truly good man, but that he will render himself, in a greater or less degree, useful. For the ruling passion of the renovated nature is to do good; and where opportunities for the indulgence of this passion do not otherwise exist, it will itself create them, and that in spite of the most powerful opposing influences. But there are many cases in which the amount of good which an individual performs, seems to fall greatly below not only his aspirations but his capacities; and we are ready to say, — ‘What might he not have accomplished, if he had found

the place for which his Creator fitted him?' And, on the other hand, there are cases in which we feel that a noble and sanctified mind has fallen directly into its appropriate sphere; is surrounded with influences most favourable to the development of its powers, and is cast upon a field in which its efforts will accomplish the most important results. Of this, a glance at the life of our departed friend will show that he was a striking example.

He was born in the year 1769, — by a singular coincidence, a few months before his intimate and illustrious friend, the Rev. Dr. John M. Mason, and a few months after another very different and more startling character, — Napoleon Buonaparte. It was just when the political elements were combining for the storm of our revolution; and his earliest education, as well as his more advanced training for active life, fell into the period in which our country was convulsed by war, and afterwards distracted by internal dissensions incident to the organization of the government; — a period full of interest indeed, but most unfavourable to the successful exercise of the ministry of the gospel of peace. And then again, it was just when the din of party strife had in some measure died away, and the new order of things with which Heaven had crowned our efforts, had come up,

that he began his professional career. While the influence of a faithful ministry was greatly needed to repair the waste of christian principle and christian feeling which the preceding years of conflict had occasioned, the comparative quietude which then prevailed, allowed the ambassador of Christ to discharge without molestation his appropriate duties. The grand design of the ministry was then, as ever, to save the souls of men; but it accomplished incidentally another important end, in giving that tone and direction to public sentiment during our infancy as a nation, which should constitute the best pledge of the permanence of our institutions. That was the period also in which Protestant Christendom began to receive a fresh baptism of the Holy Ghost; in which the command to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature began to press upon the conscience and heart of the church; in which, in our own country especially, spiritual religion began to be revived, and to urge itself not upon individuals only, but upon masses, as the paramount concern. And in proportion as the evangelical spirit, the spirit of missions, the spirit of an enlarged and active piety, has since increased, so also have the advantages for effective efforts on the part of the ministry increased, resulting from a more extended

fellowship, a more cordial and vigorous co-operation. The machinery which this spirit has brought into existence, has long since become vast and complicated; and to keep it in successful motion has required all the wisdom and watchfulness and vigour of the church, and especially of the ministry; and when its movements have nevertheless sometimes become discordant, there has been work for the greatest and best minds to restore it to harmonious action. There have been, during the period to which I refer, some most agitating and painful scenes in the church; but even this fact does not form an exception to my general remark; for these scenes have furnished opportunities for doing good, not merely by direct labours in the cause of reform, but by setting an example of christian forbearance and charity. Never, I may safely say, since the world began, has there been a period so fraught with facilities for ministerial usefulness, as that in which our lamented friend has exercised his ministry.

I may mention also the unusually long period in which he was permitted to labour. From the time that he was licensed to preach till his death was about fifty-nine years;—that is, from 1791 to 1850;—more than double the usual active life of ministers in this country. And notwithstanding his health, during a considera-

ble part of this period, was by no means vigorous, yet, by a most careful regimen, he succeeded in keeping himself almost always in a condition for labour. Even in his old age his faculties were kept bright by exercise; and until within a few weeks of his death, if you had called upon him, though he would have given you a cordial welcome, it is not improbable that you would have found him with his pen in hand, or making his preparation to meet his class.

Now let us view his opportunities for usefulness in connection with the places which he occupied. Any man to whom it is given to preach the gospel to his fellow men,—no matter how humble may be the sphere of his ministrations, enjoys a precious privilege; for he has the honour of being, in a high sense, a co-worker with God, and is in the way of gathering jewels to his own immortal crown. Still it is, on some accounts, a higher privilege, to dispense the word of life to a large and intelligent congregation; because there his influence is more widely felt, inasmuch as he speaks to those who have the chief agency in moulding public sentiment and giving a tone to public morals. It was Dr. Miller's lot to occupy such a place as this. His early and only settlement as a pastor was in the First Presbyterian Church in the city of New-York; which,

probably, at that time, embraced more wealth, talent and influence than any other church in our connection. In addition to this, it was the general resort of strangers; and while Congress held its sessions in that city, most of the members were accustomed to attend it. The minister of such a congregation must of course preside at a great fountain of public influence; many of his stated hearers are among the men who give character to a city and a country; and every sermon that he preaches, falls upon the ear and tells upon the destiny of some, whom he will never meet till he meets them in the judgment.

Having served here for twenty years, he was appointed to the professorship of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government in the Theological Seminary at Princeton. And great as his opportunities for usefulness were before, they were, by means of this change, rendered much greater. Though at first he had but a little band of pupils around him, yet he lived to see the number increase many fold; and every theological student, so far as he fulfils the design of his education, becomes a radiating point of evangelical influence. He who forms the character of the ministry, forms also the character of the church; and thus his influence pours down in an ever-widening and ever-deepening current to the end of time. What

an opportunity for doing good has he to whom this high interest is confided! And then the fact that he holds such a place, gives additional authority to his opinions and counsels and acts in all his public relations. He can scarcely open his lips without touching some spring that will vibrate, perhaps to the inmost heart of the wilderness, perhaps to the other side of the globe.

It is interesting to note how the providence of God sometimes throws a great and good man into his proper place by what are often regarded accidental instrumentalities. I lately heard Dr. Miller say that he was brought to both the places which he had occupied as a minister without the least design on his own part; that he was on his way to a comparatively obscure parish on Long Island, when his labours were put in requisition by the Wall-street Church; and that his election to the professorship was as unexpected as it was unsought, and only filled him with painful anxiety. Thanks to that beneficent Providence which led him by a way that he knew not into places of the highest usefulness.

IV. He was not less distinguished for the *services* he rendered than for the opportunities he enjoyed. A man may have the means of doing good to any extent, and yet may use them to little purpose; nay, he may live and die a mere

cumberer of the ground. Quite the reverse of this was true of him whose character we contemplate.

Dr. Miller, as a preacher, certainly ranked among the best of his time. His sermons were not mere frigid essays on the one hand, nor declamatory harangues on the other. They were marked by the most rigid regard to method, by simple and beautiful analysis, by a perspicuous and classical style, and by a serious and impressive exhibition of evangelical truth. His voice was mild and pleasant rather than forcible, his utterance deliberate and distinct, his gesture appropriate but not very abundant, and his whole manner bland, affectionate and dignified. Of the degree of visible success which attended his ministry in New-York I am not informed; but I take for granted that the gospel could not be preached for a series of years as he preached it, without producing, sooner or later, important results. He contributed too not a little to elevate the character of the American pulpit; and if there were others who had a wider popularity and more control of the passions of the multitude, there were few whose pulpit productions had in them so much of weighty and well digested material, or would so well abide the test of an intelligent criticism.

But it was no doubt as a professor in the Theological Seminary, that he gained his brightest honours, and reached his highest usefulness. In the discharge of the various duties belonging to this important trust, he was remarkable for diligence, punctuality and efficiency. As a lecturer he was singularly clear, natural, full of apt illustration, and if reasoning was required, generally cogent and convincing. His three departments were Church History, Church Government, and the Composition and Delivery of a Sermon: in each of them he showed himself a master; and if he had less vivacity of manner than some other lecturers, it was more than compensated by the richness and variety of his matter, and the simplicity and purity of his style. His lectures on the Composition and Delivery of a Sermon, were, I doubt not, among the best that have ever been written on that subject; and as they have done much for the improvement of our American preaching already, it is to be hoped that they may do still more by being given to the world through the press. He was a most judicious critic; and those were not the least valuable of his criticisms which related to the minute details of composition and public speaking. His exquisite taste instinctively detected the smallest faults, and suggested the appropriate corrections.

But we can form no adequate estimate of his usefulness as a professor, without taking into account the influence which he exerted upon the students by his general character and example. I have already spoken of his courteous and dignified bearing in society: in this respect he was a fine model for the young men; indeed he was a practical exemplification of his own invaluable work on "*Clerical Manners and Habits*;"—a work which eminently bears the peculiar characteristics of his own mind, and which few ministers can read without finding themselves at once reprov'd and benefitted. But it was his moral and religious character which had the most vital bearing upon the interests of the institution. Every one felt that he was a shining example of all the christian graces; and by the general tenor of his life, as well as by his more direct efforts, he kept himself in benign and effective contact with the minds of his pupils. His own personal religion was a delightful compound of wisdom, purity, meekness, fortitude and love; and those who were privileged constantly to walk in the light of such an example, certainly enjoyed a most important means of moral and spiritual growth.

Dr. Miller accomplished much by his labours as an author. His publications are numerous and

relate to a great variety of subjects, showing that he was a vigorous student and that his mind took a wide range. His first work of any considerable extent, was a "*Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century*," written in quite the early part of his ministry: it acquired for him great reputation not only on this side of the water but in Great Britain; and it is not invidious to say, even at this day, that it is, on some accounts, among the most valuable contributions to History of which our country can boast. Several of his works were controversial; at least were designed to defend what he regarded important truth: they are all perspicuous, logical and well considered, and have a high rank among the ablest works on the subjects of which they treat. Two or three of his larger productions are biographical, commemorating faithfully and beautifully some of the illustrious dead to whom he had been intimately allied and specially endeared. His work on the "*Eldership*" is in great and general repute, at least throughout his own denomination; and I have no less authority than that of Dr. Chalmers for saying that it is the very best work that has been given to the church on that subject. He published a large number of occasional discourses which are worthy of a more permanent existence than, I fear, from the form in which they have appeared, they are likely to

have. I think it will be generally conceded that few, if any, of his contemporaries in the American church, have done so much by the pen to perpetuate their influence as himself; and if a list were to be made out of a very small number of our writers who are most known and most respected abroad, his name would undoubtedly have a prominent place among them.

I must speak of him also as a counsellor. Here his calmness, his prudence, his sound judgment and excellent spirit and inflexible integrity, were all brought into exercise to the best advantage. In ecclesiastical judicatories he was always heard with attention and deference. His love of peace was too strong to yield to any thing but the love of truth and of God; and even when he felt constrained to appear temporarily on the arena of party conflict, he never forgot what was due to an adversary; he may sometimes, like other men, have mistaken his duty, but he never sacrificed his courtesy or lost his temper. In the management of the more general interests of the church, especially in her benevolent operations, he bore a prominent part; and for this his familiarity with every thing pertaining to ecclesiastical rule, as well as his uncommon aptitude for business, abundantly qualified him. He was not only one of the wise men but one of the working men of

the denomination; for while his mind was fertile in expedients for the promotion of all that was good, he never shrunk from the labour which was requisite to carry them into effect.

Estimate now, in view of these several particulars, the amount of service he has rendered to the church, and say whether he must not, in this respect, be ranked among the most favoured of her ministers.

V. He was signally blessed in his *social relations*.

It was his privilege, during his whole life, to be able to associate every thing endearing and beautiful with the idea of home. Not only were his parents distinguished for intelligence and piety, but his brothers and sisters were worthy of their parentage and their advantages: two of his brothers were devoted to the legal, and two to the medical profession; and though, with one exception, they were cut off almost at the commencement of their career, yet they severally gave promise of great eminence in their respective professions, and the one who survived the longest actually attained it. And from the time that he became the head of a family himself, nothing ever seemed wanting to him that could adorn or dignify the domestic constitution. Some of his children have indeed been removed by death;

but he had the comforting conviction that they died in faith. The wife of his youth was spared to minister to him under the decays of age, and to witness the tranquillity and triumph of his departing spirit.

Then if we go beyond the circle of his domestic relations, we shall still find him associated with the wisest and the best. Nisbet, his theological instructor, was known and venerated equally on both sides of the Atlantic. His capacity for acquiring knowledge, and his power of retaining it, and his facility at imparting it, together with his intense devotion to labour and almost matchless wit, rendered him one of the wonders of his time. Rodgers, his colleague in the ministry, was an eminently wise and good man. He had a heart that could with equal ease kindle with devotion and melt with charity. He had been the companion of Whitefield and Davies, the Tennents and the Blairs; and the history of the Presbyterian church, from almost the earliest period, was with him a matter of personal recollection, as it had been, to a great extent, a matter of personal experience. And on his accepting the professorship at Princeton, his most intimate associate was a man of whom, if it were not so unnecessary, it might yet be deemed unseasonable, to speak, inasmuch as, (thanks to God's preserv-

ing goodness,) he is still waiting for his change. I may say, however, that the two have lived, during this long period, in unbroken harmony, each delighting to aid and to honour the other; and the newspapers have informed us how, the other day, the venerable survivor stood over the remains of his friend, and rendered, in a way peculiarly his own, an affecting and faithful tribute to his memory. Indeed I very lately heard Dr. Miller express his gratitude to God that, from the first establishment of the Seminary to the time when the remark was made, there had never, to his knowledge, existed, for half an hour, the least unpleasant feeling on the part of either of the professors towards any one of his colleagues.

But besides the men with whom he was thus more immediately associated as a student, a pastor, a professor, there were a multitude of others, both in Church and in State, among the brightest ornaments in their respective spheres, with whom he was thrown into relations of various degrees of intimacy. Witherspoon and Smith and Kollock; the Wilsons and the Linns; Ewing and Green and Rice; Livingston, Mason, Abeel, Romeyn and McLeod; McWhorter, Griffin, Richards and Chester; Dwight, Morse and the elder Buckminster, — are but a sample of the greater lights in the ministry, with whom he was more or less

familiar. Many who were most honoured in civil life, such as Dickinson, Jay, Spencer, Boudinot, Rush, Hamilton, and above all, the Father of his country, were on the list of his personal friends. Indeed he has always been associated with the ablest and best men; in the early part of his life they were the great and good spirits who had mingled in the scenes of the Revolution, — not to speak of other stirring scenes of a yet earlier date; in later years, they have been the illustrious men of a succeeding period; and at the time of his death, notwithstanding he was a man of another generation, he could probably reckon among his acquaintances as great a number of individuals distinguished for character and rank, as almost any of his contemporaries. Though he never crossed the ocean, he maintained a correspondence with several learned men in Europe, who duly appreciated his great attainments and his exalted character.

Surely it was a high privilege that he enjoyed in being thus, throughout his whole life, the associate of men eminent for wisdom and virtue. It was a privilege to become familiar with the habits of so many great, accomplished and sanctified minds. Nor was it less a privilege to contribute his share to the common improvement; to help mould the intellects that were active in

moulding his own; to be a co-worker with those who could do most and best for the benefit of the race.

VI. I remark, in the last place, that Dr. Miller was eminently favoured in respect to *his death, and all the circumstances preceding and attending it.*

The Presbyterian Church he cherished with a solicitude truly paternal. Had he died a few years before, he would have left it agitated by violent dissensions; but the storm had passed away, and even those who had been widely separated, had begun to feel the mutual attraction of christian love. The Theological Seminary seemed to be the home of his best affections, as it had been the scene of his untiring and protracted labours. Had he died a few months before, the chair which he had occupied so long, and with so much dignity and success, would have been left vacant; but before he was taken to his rest, he was privileged to know that it was filled, and by the very man whom his deliberate judgment not less than his warm affection would have placed in it. The inauguration of his successor, though justly hailed as a jubilee to the institution, was nevertheless invested with a sort of funereal gloom; for while the Church was opening her arms to welcome the young professor, she knew that

the chariot was making ready to bear the spirit of his venerable predecessor to Heaven. And his family too, — he could leave them, thanking God for the abundant favour He had shown them, and for the promise they gave of future usefulness in their various relations. And while his dying eye could thus contemplate with perfect composure the world without, there was nothing to agitate or terrify, but every thing to sustain and comfort, in a view of the world within. I do not mean that he rested upon his own inward goodness as the meritorious ground of his salvation; for he had not language strong enough to express his sense of his own unworthiness and his entire reliance on the Saviour's merits; but I mean that he had the witness within to his own adoption: he had evidence of having complied with the terms of salvation, that cast out all painful apprehension; in short he *knew* in whom he had believed, and was persuaded that He was able to keep that which he had committed to Him.

It was my privilege to have a brief interview with him, but a few weeks before he received the summons to enter into the joy of his Lord. I saw him in his study, where he had first given me his hand thirty-three years before. He was sitting in a posture designed to facilitate his labouring respiration. He received me with all his accus-

tomed cordiality, and the usual smile of welcome passed over his countenance, which seemed even then to be touched by the finger of death. His whole appearance was a compound of the deep solemnity that becomes the dying man, and the joyful tranquillity that becomes the dying Christian. He had no breath to waste on mere worldly matters, but began immediately to talk of the goodness of the Master whom he had served; of the great imperfection of the service he had rendered; and of the glorious eternal home, which, through grace, he was about to enter. It is my sober conviction that I never heard such words from the lips of mortal man; and yet his spirit seemed struggling with thoughts and feelings which he had no words to express. When I intimated a wish that, if it were God's will, he might be spared to us yet a little longer, — he replied, — “I am not conscious of having any wish on that subject. I think I can say, Blessed Master, when thou wilt, where thou wilt, as thou wilt.” I came away convinced that I had been listening to a dying man; and yet such an impression had he left upon me, that I could not think of him in connection with the grave, but only with the glorious world beyond it. Several others who saw him about the same time, have assured me that his chamber seemed to them like a conse-

crated place, "quite on the verge of Heaven." The venerable Dr. Janeway, who had been his intimate friend almost from early life, told me that, in a brief but most solemn interview which he had with him shortly before his death, Dr. Miller requested, before they parted, that he would kneel down by his side, that they might once more join their supplications at the throne of grace; and when he had knelt, and was just about to commence the prayer, his revered friend, with what seemed almost literally dying breath, led off in the exercise with the utmost appropriateness, tenderness and fervour. These incidents, it is understood, were but a specimen of what was constantly occurring during his last weeks; and when I have said that his sun went down, not only without a cloud, but in full orb'd glory, I have given you an epitome of the history of his departure.

And he was richly favoured not in his death only, but in his burial. His funeral was no mere matter of solemn form: it had in it every element of substantial and honourable mourning. The great and the good were drawn thither from a distance to testify their gratitude for his services and their reverence for his memory; and words of truth and tenderness were responded to in tears of sorrowful remembrance and deep affection.

And if there is a grave yard which the saints of all coming generations will delight to honour, — nay, at which the angels, from their reverence for redeemed dust, sometimes pause, surely it is the one in which they laid that beloved man of God ; for his companions in the slumber of the tomb, as doubtless they are also in the ecstasies of Heaven, are Burr and Edwards, Davies and Witherspoon, Smith and Green ; and who shall say how many more of the wise and the venerable shall hereafter be gathered to that illustrious brotherhood ? I love to think that his mortal body will repose in a bed of so much honour, till, having slept out its long sleep, it shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and come forth ; and in the act of coming forth, shall become incorruptible and immortal.

Enough surely has been said to put it beyond all doubt that our departed friend was one of the most favoured of men ; and yet we have contemplated him hitherto only in connection with the life that he lived and the death that he died. What then shall we say of him when we remember that this favoured life and death, were only the preparation for, and the entrance to, a glorious, immortal life ; that the services in which he found so much delight here, were but the appropriate training for the infinitely nobler services of the higher state ; that the blessings which were so

profusely showered upon him here, were only the shadow of those good things to come which are treasured up in Christ to be the everlasting portion of the saints! As long as his lips could move, he kept on testifying of his Redeemer's love and grace; but who shall describe the rapture which the same exalted theme now kindles in his soul, as he bears his part in the song of the ransomed! His mind which here scarcely knew any rest from the labour of discovering or illustrating, of vindicating or applying truth, is now renovated in its entire constitution, and pursues its inquiries amidst all the advantages of a residence in the third Heavens. And ere long his eye, that used to beam so benignly upon us, will open with fresh lustre from the sepulchral sleep; and his venerable form, which we saw at last bowed under the palsy of age, will re-appear in the vigour and bloom of perpetual youth. Here is the reward of a good and faithful servant. Here is the principle of spiritual life matured into the life eternal. Here is a perfect being passing rapidly onward from glory to glory. I acknowledge that I speak of things of which I can form but a feeble conception; and perhaps it were better to fall back upon that significant, yet mysterious declaration of the Apostle, — "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but this we know, that when He

shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

What an impressive view has been furnished by the character we have been contemplating, of the majesty of true religion! I do not say that religion had done its perfect work for our departed friend, so long as he was in the body: doubtless his heart, even in its last pulsations, was, in a modified sense only, a clean heart; and it was not till he had reached the connecting point between earth and Heaven, that the Spirit could smile upon his finished work, and pronounce all very good. But I do say that religion shone in his character with rare attraction; that it invigorated and elevated his intellect; that it consecrated his heart as a temple of benevolence and purity; that it made his life fruitful in deeds of magnanimous import; that it brightened his path in the hour of sorrow; that it brought down Heaven to his death bed, and was the pillow on which he rested as he languished into life. Come, ye votaries of a cheerless and bewildering skepticism, some of whom would banish my Redeemer, and others my Creator, from the universe; come, ye who would expel from Christianity the supernatural element and thus neutralize its healing virtue; come, ye who are willing to tolerate religion in others, provided you can be excused from it

yourselves; come, especially ye young men, for whom the infidel witling has spread his snare, and who are already walking unwarily on perilous ground,—come, one and all, and not only become convinced of the reality, but surrender yourselves to the power, and bow before the majesty, of religion. Here is a character that I am not afraid to submit to your scrutiny; and when you have hunted out all its imperfections, and thrown them into the light of noonday, enough of moral purity and sublimity will remain, to establish, beyond peradventure, the divinity of that religion by whose influence it was formed. You cannot be an infidel while contemplating the achievements of christian virtue, and especially while walking among the graves of the saints.

Who shall fix a limit to the influence of a great and holy man? Who shall say how much a single mind acting steadily, patiently, resolutely, in its appropriate sphere and through a long life, shall accomplish for the improvement and exaltation of the race? We are apt to judge of a man's usefulness by what falls within our immediate horizon; we forget that, beyond the range of our vision, there may spring up innumerable plants of righteousness from seed which his charities or prayers have wafted thither; that thousands of monuments of his beneficent acti-

vity may rise, on which his name shall be inscribed in a character that is legible only to the eye of God and of angels. Oh, if we could contemplate the life of our lamented friend, in all its various and luminous details; could we see how, as the habit of doing good strengthened, and the means of doing good multiplied, the good influences which he exerted waxed bright and powerful and numerous as the sun beams; could we see how one benevolent action sent joy and life in one direction, and another in an opposite direction, and how, like separate streams moving in circuitous courses, they have ere long met and mingled in a common tide of blessing; above all, could we behold the fruit of his long life as it will be eternally gathered in Heaven, and mark how his unostentatious labours on earth took hold of the destinies of the glorified, and even quickened the joys and the songs of seraphs;—I say, could we realize this sublime vision, then might we have some adequate idea of what it is for a good man to live; then should we know better how to honour the memory of such a man after he is dead; then should we feel that the grave had not gained more than half a triumph, inasmuch as he is still represented here by influences which are essentially immortal.

My friends, the tomb has not rendered the example of our departed friend less impressive, nor has it rendered our obligation to heed it less imperative. I would that it might come like a baptism of fire and love upon the whole church. I would that its lessons in respect to the value of christian truth and the purity of christian ordinances, might be written, as with the point of a diamond, on the door posts of every sanctuary. I would that it might hang as a sacred directory in every theological seminary, to lead to diligence, prudence, fidelity and devotion. I would that it might be as a presiding genius in all our ecclesiastical judicatories; encouraging all well directed efforts for the promotion of truth and piety, and frowning into silent shame those who would produce needless discord among brethren. I would that every minister of the gospel would press it, as a thing of life and power, to his heart; and that, in the devout study of it, he might become more and more a workman that needs not to be ashamed. I would that every private Christian might bend over it in reverential contemplation, till its beautiful lineaments of heavenly grace are fully reproduced in his own character, and he realizes a new auxiliary in the labours of the christian life. Know you, every one, that the grave of God's departed servant is preaching

to you; and by such a ministry can you, will you, refuse to be admonished and instructed?

There is one effect which this dispensation of Providence ought to have, — I trust will have, — upon our denomination at large; — I mean, that of awakening a yet deeper interest in our Theological Seminary. The fact that it has been the immediate theatre of the labours of so large a part of such a life, conveys, of itself, no equivocal evidence that it is worthy of all the confidence, and more than all the support, which has hitherto been extended to it. I honour the wisdom of the Head of the Church in appointing men first to give character to that institution, to whom the momentous office might be so safely and advantageously entrusted; and I say unhesitatingly that the debt of gratitude which the church owes to them, is second to that only which she owes to God. At no period, perhaps, since its first existence, could the Seminary afford so well to mourn a professor's death as now; for not only has it, under highly favouring auspices, reached a vigorous maturity, but the prudence of the church in connection with the magnanimity of the now departed professor,* had made provision for the

*It is well known that Dr. Miller had, for some time, been desirous to resign his chair, to some younger, and as he thought, more efficient person; but it was not till the meeting of the last General Assembly that he was permitted to carry this desire into effect. The Assembly, on accepting his resignation, voted the continuance of his full salary to the close of his life, but he could be persuaded to accept of only one half of it.

exigency, and each chair was ably and honourably filled, so that no part of the machinery has stood still for an hour. And besides, it was no premature departure, no striking down of a great man in the vigour of life, that has caused the mourning; but it was the very gentlest loosing of the silver cord, after the almond tree had long flourished; it was the removal to a nobler sphere, of a man, whose faculties had been exerted here to their utmost measure of time and strength, so that they needed to be re-cast for higher services in the mould of immortality. And now, as the church venerates the memory of her lamented professor, let her know that the most fitting monument she can build to his honour, the most fragrant wreath she can lay upon his grave, is the liberal and faithful fostering of that institution with whose interests were identified the most important labours of his life. Let her remember that though one professor has passed into the Heavens, whither also Jesus the great forerunner has gone, others remain to be sustained and cheered by her bounty and her prayers; and that she cannot be wanting in suitable regards to the living, without offending against the memory of the dead. Let her remember especially that one venerable father still lingers there in remarkable vigour and perhaps undiminished usefulness, who

has himself formed a vital part of the institution from the time of its birth to the present hour; and let her thankfully appreciate his continued activity, and by every means in her power, accumulate benedictions upon his old age. I say again, let that School of the Prophets live in the benefactions, the prayers, the best affections of the church. "If I forget thee, let my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!"

In giving to the services of this evening their distinctive complexion, I have not been unmindful, my brethren, of the fact that this day has been sacred with us to the commemoration of a nobler life and death than that of any mere mortal. And yet I could not feel that it would be a violent transition to pass from the death of the Master to the death of one of his servants; especially as from the shame and agony of the former sprang the peace and triumph of the latter. Has not our waiting at the cross this morning been the very best preparation for our lingering at the grave this evening? And, on the other hand, how could we better estimate the worth of our Redeemer's sufferings, than by closely and minutely inspecting one of the brightest gems in his Mediatorial crown? Go then, Christian, under the combined influence of all the solemn services of this

day, and address yourself earnestly, cheerfully, perseveringly, to the whole circle of your duties. Hold to your mind the love of Christ, in all its matchless expressions, in all its amazing results. Hold to your mind the power of the cross, in changing sinners into saints, and exalting saints above angels. Hold to your mind the transcendent beauty of a christian life, and especially the placid triumph of a christian death. Thus will it be good for you not only that Christ has died, but that the saints die also; for while, in the blood of the former your robes will be washed and made white, in the death of the latter you may catch some quickening view of immortal glory, as the Heavens open to receive them,

LIST OF DR. MILLER'S PUBLICATIONS.

VOLUMES.

1. A brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century, 2 vols. 8vo.. 1803
2. Letters on the Constitution and Order of the Christian Ministry, addressed to the Members of the Presbyterian Churches in the city of New-York, 12mo..... 1807.
3. A Continuation of Letters concerning the Constitution and Order of the Christian Ministry, being an Examination of the Strictures of the Rev. Drs. Bowden and Kemp, and the Rev. Mr. How, on the former series, 12mo.. 1809.
4. Memoirs of the Rev. John Rogers, D. D., 8vo. 1813.
5. Letters on Unitarianism, 8vo. 1821.
6. Letters on Clerical Manners and Habits, 12mo..... 1827.
7. An Essay on the Warrant, Nature and Duties of the Office of the Ruling Elder in the Presbyterian Church, 12mo..... 1831.
8. Letters to Presbyterians, on the Present Crisis in the Presbyterian Church in the United States, 12mo. 1833.
9. Two Sermons on Baptism, preached at Freehold, N. J., 12mo. 1834.
10. Memoir of the Rev. Charles Nisbet, D. D., 12mo..... 1840.
11. The Primitive and Apostolical Order of the Church of Christ Vindicated, 12mo..... 1840.
12. The Warrant, Nature and Duties of the Office of Ruling Elder in the Presbyterian Church; A Sermon preached in Philadelphia, with an Appendix, 18mo..... 1843
13. Thoughts on Public Prayer, 12mo..... 1848

PAMPHLETS.

1. A Sermon preached in New-York, on the Anniversary of American Independence, 1793.
2. A Discourse before the Grand Lodge of the State of New-York, 1795.
3. A Sermon delivered in New-York, on the nineteenth Anniversary of the Independence of America, 1795.
4. A Discourse delivered before the New-York Society for the Manumission of Slaves, &c. 1797.

- 5 A Sermon delivered in the city of New-York, on a Day of National Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer,..... 1798.
6. A Sermon delivered in New-York, on a Day of Thanksgiving, Humiliation and Prayer, observed on account of the removal from the city of a malignant and mortal disease,. 1799.
7. A Sermon occasioned by the death of General Washington, 1799.
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16. A Sermon delivered at New-Haven, at the ordination of Rev. Messrs. William Goodell, William Richards, and Artemas Bishop, as Evangelists and Missionaries to the Heathen, 1822.
17. A Sermon entitled "The Literary Fountains Healed," preached in the Chapel of the College of New-Jersey,..... 1823.
18. A Sermon delivered at the opening of the new Presbyterian Church in Arch-street, Philadelphia,..... 1823.
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21. A Discourse delivered at Princeton, before the Literary and Philosophical Society of New-Jersey,..... 1825.
22. A Letter to a gentleman of Baltimore, in reference to the case of the Rev. Mr. Duncan,..... 1826.
23. A Sermon delivered in Baltimore, at the installation of the Rev. John Breckenridge,..... 1826.
24. Two Sermons in the National Preacher, (Nos. 8 and 9,) on the Evidence and Duty of being on the Lord's Side, 1826.

25. An Introductory* Lecture addressed to the Students of the Theological Seminary at Princeton, on the Importance of the Gospel Ministry,..... 1827.
26. An Introductory Lecture to the Students of the Theological Seminary at Princeton, on the Importance of Mature Preparatory Study for the Ministry,..... 1829.
27. A Sermon preached at Albany, at the installation of Rev. W. B. Sprague, 1829.
28. Two Sermons in the National Preacher, (Nos. 98 and 99,) on Religious Fasting,..... 1831.
29. A Sermon on Ecclesiastical Polity, one of the Spruce-street Lectures,..... 1832.
30. A Sermon in the Presbyterian Preacher, (Vol. I, No. 1,) on the Importance of Gospel Truth,... 1832.
31. A Sermon entitled, "A Plea for an Enlarged Ministry," preached in Philadelphia, before the General Assembly's Board of Education, and published in the Presbyterian Preacher, (Vol. III, No. 1,)..... 1834.
32. A Sermon delivered at Pittsburgh, before the Association of the Alumni of the Theological Seminary at Princeton,.... 1835.
33. Two Sermons in the National Preacher, (Nos. 198 and 199,) on the Importance and Means of Domestic Happiness,.... 1835.
34. A Sermon preached at Baltimore, before the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1835.
35. A Sermon preached at Princeton, in memory of the Rev. George S. Woodhull,..... 1835.
36. A Tract entitled, "Presbyterianism, the truly Primitive and Apostolical Constitution of the Church of Christ,"..... 1835.
37. A Sermon preached at Baltimore, at the installation of the Rev. John C. Backus, 1836.
38. Two Sermons in the National Preacher, (Nos. 230 and 231,) on Christ our Righteousness, 1836.
39. A Sermon on the Dangers of Education in Roman Catholic Seminaries, preached in Baltimore and New-York, 1837.
40. A Sermon preached in Philadelphia, before the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, 1838.
41. An Address delivered at Elizabethtown, at the dedication of a Monument to the memory of the Rev. James Caldwell,.. 1845.

In addition to the preceding, Dr. Miller published a Biographical Sketch of Edward Miller, M. D., prefixed to his works; an Essay introductory to Lectures to Young People, by W. B. Sprague; a Letter appended to Lectures on Revivals, by W. B. Sprague; Contributions to the Biography of Mrs. Margaret Breckenridge, &c. &c.

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A SERMON

PREACHED IN GREYFRIAR'S CHURCH, EDINBURGH,

13TH MARCH 1859,

ON OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF

THE HONOURABLE

LORD MURRAY.

BY ROBERT LEE, D.D.

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TO

LADY MURRAY,

This Sermon, a sincere though feeble and imperfect testimony to the virtues of her late Husband, is respectfully and affectionately dedicated.

1ST PETER, i, 18-25.

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received by* tradition from your fathers ;

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot :

20 Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

21 Who by him do believe in God that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory ; that your faith and hope might be in God.

22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren ; *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently.

23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

24 For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away :

25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

As we pass through life, the contradiction becomes continually more painful between our outer condition and our inner man, between the instinct of fixity or perpetuity and the daily increasing experience of change and decay. We live in the world ; and as we live, our affections grow, expand, fix themselves, with

greater and greater strength, upon perhaps an increasing number of objects. We are taught more to love our fellow creatures by the good we discover in them, by the good they do us, and yet more, by the good we do them. Our roots fix themselves in the soil around, deeper and deeper, from year to year; and our shoots and sapplings also spring up on every side, as if to shelter us from the blast; when, lo! we wither as the grass, we exhale as morning dew, are gone, like our dreams,—“Surely the people is grass.” And this is not confined to any set of men, or condition of society, but all go together in one indiscriminate throng,—rich and poor, good and bad, the wise and the unwise, the infant and the patriarch, he that hath done good and he that wrought evil upon the earth,—the grand army of mortality is recruited from all these alike. “All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.”

Even those who doubt whether we have a gospel or not, surely cannot doubt whether or not

we need one. Observing this scene of desolation ever spreading around us, the arid desert still enclosing us more and more, we cannot but look for some refuge and deliverance, some place where we may have shelter and rest. Born of mortality, members of the family whose inheritance is sorrow, pain, disappointment, and death, we cannot possibly be reconciled to this lot. Our hearts protest against the doom which, however inevitable, is felt not to be natural; for it neither is, nor can ever be made, congenial to our feelings. Our souls and all that is within us rise up in rebellion; and though all men have tried in vain to burst this fetter, the faith still remains that it should be burst asunder, and also the hope that it will be.

This faith and hope, lying indestructible at the bottom of man's nature, are the prophecy of a Messiah to all mankind; the whole creation—travelling and groaning under the load of vanity, the yoke of sin, the bondage of corruption—hears, however indistinctly, a word which holds it up, and causes it still to endure:

and though we can ill interpret this vague and dark oracle, yet are we conscious that it is a word of joy and peace, that hope is in it, that somehow it is a promise of redemption. We see in it a gleam of light, a day-spring from on high, a gospel of salvation,—indeed, a divine word, preached everywhere in all ages, though we cannot tell “whence it cometh or whether it goeth.”

This faith is the prophetic forerunner, preaching in the hearts of men the doctrine of repentance, going still before the face of the Lord to prepare his way,—crying with a voice that resounds through all the wide wilderness of humanity, “All flesh is grass, and all its glory is as the flower of the field : surely the people is grass.” And yet the terrific thunder of that stern message melts, ere its close, into divinest music. The frightful sentence of death carries in its last words, the promise of an endless life. Even so,

“Night’s darkness deepens into rising day.”

Yes, Brethren, the last words are not of despair.

“Dust to dust, ashes to ashes, earth to earth,”—these sad sounds are not the very end. No; blessed be God!—putting off this mortal, laying this corruptible in the dust, we accept it with resignation,—we bow without fear to the stroke; “being born again (to a living hope), not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

How deep should our thankfulness be that there is something which is abiding. While the world passeth away—while our friends and acquaintances die—while all that we loved and trusted and revered goes down in rapid succession to the dust—while our family circles are broken up, to be completed no more in this world—while the wise and the good fall like the rest before the inexorable mower—and while we feel in ourselves the same working of mortality—how deep should be our thankfulness that there is something that does not pass away; that there is that which remains firm amid all these agitated waves; and that we, standing upon that immoveable rock, may also ourselves re-

main unshaken by all the wild agitations and startling vicissitudes of the world.

We know man ; we see what *he* is. “His days are vanity, like smoke they consume away ;” he “withereth like the grass of the field.” “Trust not in princes nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth ; he returneth to his dust : in that very day his thoughts perish.” His designs and purposes go with him to the land of forgetfulness. But we have heard his voice who burst the bands of death ; and “by him we believe in God, that raised him from the dead, so that *our faith and hope are in God.*” And knowing “the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent,” we have eternal life, and are raised superior to despair, either on account of our brethren or ourselves.

We know man ; and if we knew him only, how perplexed we should be ; for, admiring, loving, pitying him, we learn from him the lesson of doubt not of faith. He carries our thoughts and affections away with him into darkness, sending back no ray to hint whether he is gone,—what, where, how he is, or whether he is at all. His

history rather teaches despair than either faith or hope; and we ask, What after all is this perishing worm? Excellent, yet he dies! Knowing much, making many discoveries, reaching, or almost reaching, to wisdom, he yet knows not to cheat the sepulchre; all his researches and discoveries and inventions do not help him to escape what he dreads; so that he is as mortal as "the poor beetle that he treads upon." He flatters himself that he is the image of God; what is that God whose image he is?

Out of this labyrinth we should never escape unless the divinity had shone through our mortal nature in the person and history of Christ. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." "By him we believe in God that raised him from the dead and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God."

This being so, all is well. We cannot any more doubt, fear, suspect anything. The dark clouds are rolled away from our souls; and in the light of the divine glory, shining in Christ, we see light clearly—the light that guides our steps through life—that upholds them when we

tread the dark valley—that cheers and assures our hearts when we see those entering whom we would willingly accompany, if it were given us—and enables us to look after them with comfort, and even with joy.

Yes, my Brethren, believing in God, what can distress us? Trusting in Him, what can we fear? If He be our God, we can want nothing. Having him we have all, more than we can desire, more than we can know: we are rich beyond our wishes, happy beyond our dreams. Boundless wisdom, power, mercy, goodness, grace, and love—all that these can bestow—all that is comprehended in the fulness of God, transmuting the very evil into good; working out of sin, sorrow, pain, death, and all the coarse and vile materials of this earth, exquisite fabrics of heavenly quality—the garments of eternal salvation. “All things are yours, the world, and life and death, and things present, and things to come; all are yours, for ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” “By him ye believe in God.”

In this faith we can live. We can look upon the great sea of life weltering around us, and

can feel its ups and downs without terror, or being made sick at heart by the wild confusion and terrible discord; or dreaming that this tumult wants a ruler, obeys not a law. "The Lord on high is mightier than the mighty waves of the sea." And in the same blessed faith in which we wish to live, we will study to depart; knowing that death, which subdues us, is himself subdued; and that, though conquered, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us—that, when we die, we shall indeed be born—that our putting off the tattered garments of mortality shall be our investiture with our kingly robes; and that the steps by which we descend into the sepulchre are those by which we shall mount our thrones, "to reign in life with Christ, the first born from the dead."

This, Brethren, is that word which has been spoken to us in the name of the Lord—which we have embraced, and desire to hold fast—by which we would be comforted and reassured and strengthened to do and suffer the will of God—by which also we are reconciled to the painful fact that "all flesh is grass, and all its goodliness

as the flower of the field." Let it be so. Let it wither, perish, and disappear. Let its fragrance exhale—its blossom go up as dust. Life is at its root. It will spring again. The undying seed will shoot up in vigorous life where no canker will poison it, nor any blight fall upon it. "The word of the Lord endureth for ever;" "and this is the promise he hath promised us, even eternal life." "This is the word, which by the Gospel is preached unto you."

"Having this hope in you, you are purifying yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Knowing and feeling daily more deeply that the flesh is your mortal part, ye are studying to mortify it, with its affections and lusts; that these being dead, ye may be truly alive, quickened unto all holy obedience, leading a spiritual life, dwelling in the upper regions of your being, carrying the cross in hopeful and patient strength, looking, humbly waiting, for the crown; "not being conformed to this world," or making other men's notions, caprices, or vain fashions your standard, either

of action or judgment ; being so renewed in the spirit of your mind, that ye seek to prove that which is “good,” “acceptable,” “perfect,” according to the mind and will of God, whose work is its own wages—whose service is perfect freedom.

During the fifteen years and upwards I have been minister of this parish, a great portion of the congregation, and almost the whole of the elder portion of it, has been taken away. Within the last two or three years, particularly the last year, several persons have been called out from our assembly, whose characters were so strongly marked, whose lives had been so consistent, whose virtues had been so variously proved, and were so well ascertained, that, though they were most precious to us, and their society and their influence among our greatest earthly blessings, yet their deaths also were accompanied with every possible consolation, especially by the firm conviction that our great loss was their far greater gain.

Of the persons now alluded to, some appeared

to me to approach as closely to the standard of christian perfection as the present condition of our nature admits; and I am sure that all who knew those individuals intimately, must feel that to have seen the christian character so exhibited, was one of the greatest privileges they have enjoyed in this world, and one of the best encouragements to walk in the same steps.

These events, so painful to the persons more immediately concerned, have to me also embittered, in no slight degree, the cup of sorrow which Divine Providence was pleased to put into my hand: for those whom you have been called to deplore were almost all of them my intimate friends, between whom and myself subsisted those relations of affection and confidence which naturally spring up between a pastor and his flock; which are prompted by our best feelings, consecrated by our holiest aspirations, and which are of peculiar tenderness and strength.

It would have been most pleasing to me, to commemorate those departed objects of our affection and reverence,—to hold them up for admiration and imitation. But I have hitherto

resisted the impulse, partly out of regard to what I knew would have been the wishes of the individuals themselves,—who desired not to emerge at death from that quiet privacy in which they had walked with God during life,—who were content to be known and approved of Him who seeth in secret, and will reward openly every one who is, however secretly, a doer of His will. I have been deterred also from the practice of preaching what are called Funeral Sermons, from having had occasion to observe the great abuses into which it is apt to degenerate, and the inconveniency and embarrassments which it is almost certain to occasion.

Nor should I have been tempted to depart from my former practice, on the present occasion, even by the virtues of the eminent individual who has just been taken from the midst of us, unless his public position—his intimate connection with almost all the great men and great events of the last half century—his long residence among us—his abounding munificence, and the *goodness* which distinguished him in public and in private, had made his reputation

a public property, and caused the whole community to feel that in his death they had indeed lost a friend.

That Lord Murray was an eminently kind-hearted and liberal-minded man, all the world knew. This was expressed in all his actions and words: it spoke in the tones of his voice: it shone in his very countenance. The liberality with which he contributed to works of public charity and utility is too notorious to need mention here: his princely munificence to particular individuals is not unknown; but there remains over an enormous amount of generous deeds, which were hidden from the public eye, and were rendered the more valuable to the objects of them by the considerate kindness which they manifested, and the delicacy with which they were done.

And who that needed help and countenance, and was worthy of them, did not find what he needed in this fine hearted and noble minded man? The rising artist—the struggling author—the man of genius or of talents, however humble his social position,—were sure to find in Lord

Murray a sympathizing and an effectual friend. And his benefits had no reserves ; they were done with no secret understanding ; they left the receiver as independent as before ; no adulation was expected ; no flattery was acceptable. Which of his friends, whether high or low, does not recal to memory a long list of kindnesses, —spontaneously, considerately, and gracefully done,—shewing how congenial goodness was to his nature,—how habitual to him was the exercise of the benevolent affections, and how valuable a possession, how great an honour, his friendship was !

While constitutionally generous, and prone to give for all charitable and philanthropic purposes, his was not a mere impulsive kindness. He had the strength to refuse, and he habitually did refuse, whenever he was not satisfied that the object was good, or that it was his duty to aid in it. His refusal in such cases was apt to take persons by surprise who did not understand the high principle which regulated his conduct, or who were ignorant that his own duty in the case was the only consideration

which ever entered his mind, and that the honour and glory of appearing in a subscription list had no charms for him : for, provided he himself was satisfied he did right, he was absolutely indifferent what opinion any other person, or all the world, might have of his doings.

Benevolent feelings and munificent deeds are far less uncommon than this noble independence : the two are found combined only in the purest and noblest natures.

The same just and generous disposition shewed itself in the candour and leniency of his judgments of other men. He had the happy ingenuity of detecting some good where nothing but evil appeared to common eyes,—of discovering some apology, some extenuating circumstance,—of looking at the bright side of men and their actions, if they had a bright side,—and of finding something to commend, where others saw matter of unmingled condemnation. His surely was “the charity which covereth a multitude of sins.” No one, I suppose, ever heard him pronounce a harsh censure, or utter a word that betrayed any measure of vanity, envy, spite, jealousy, or malignity.

The singular purity and simplicity of his character were so conspicuous, that the least observing could not fail to be conscious of them ; and they made one feel that, in his society, one breathed a purer moral atmosphere than in that of ordinary men. There seemed, as it were, to exhale from him, that “charity which is not puffed up, does not behave itself unseemly, which seeketh not her own, which rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth ; which believeth all things, and hopeth all things.”

Consistently with this, he shewed, habitually, how superior he was, in the judgments he formed of men, both to the little vulgar and to the great. While habitually courteous and respectful, and honouring all men according to their several claims, he made it manifest that he valued them not according to what they might possess, or might be called, but according to what they were ; and those who associated with him felt that both they and all others were loved and valued in no degree according to their wealth, rank, titles, or any such accidental circumstances, but according to their own mental and moral qualities.

So genuine and true a mind could not but hold in abhorrence all duplicity, pretension, and hypocrisy, especially religious hypocrisy; and rejoicing in that charity which he knew was the essence of the christian religion, as assuredly it was of his own character, he reckoned those persons guilty of a gross deception who, while zealous for particular opinions or for outward religious observances, omitted from their scheme that principle which sanctifies all acts and vivifies all forms; so that, without it, these, even the best of them, are as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

Bigotry, intolerance, persecution, he regarded as the spirit of irreligion presuming to claim the honour of advancing the cause of truth and piety,—the spirit of the devil assuming the robes of an angel of light; and it was the object of all the indignation and hatred of which he was capable.

Though his aversion to all pretension and display prevented him talking much of the subject, yet it was well known that religious thoughts and christian aspirations were not absent from

his mind, especially in his latter years: and his last days shewed this more distinctly than ever had before been known, to the great consolation of those who were dearest to him, and who witnessed his edifying and peaceful end.

Many have talked louder of patriotism, none was ever a sincerer patriot: and though he seldom quoted the words of Holy Scripture, what he said, and especially what he did, often brought them to the minds of others, and shewed they were not absent from his own mind. If I mistake not, this is the way in which our Lord would have us chiefly to remember him.

In short, a good man has been taken from us; so good, that

“ Even his failings leaned to virtue’s side.”

Some others may have had more admiration in some respects, especially from the outside throng; but who of them all was more admired by those who observe narrowly, and judge wisely? Who ever left a greater blank in society? And who, in our day, was ever followed to the grave with more love and gratitude?—the sweetest incense, after all, both to God and man.

Christianity and Civil Government.

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED ON

SABBATH EVENING, NOVEMBER 10, 1850.

BY

REV. WILLIAM ADAMS, D.D.,
PASTOR OF THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

NEW YORK:
CHARLES SCRIBNER,
(LATE BAKER & SCRIBNER.)
145 NASSAU STREET AND 36 PARK ROW.
1851.

Submittamus nos tum Deo, tum aliis, tum iis
qui imperium in terra gerunt: Deo quidem omni-
bus de causis; alii autem aliis propter caritatis
fœdus; principibus denique propter ordinem, publi-
cæque disciplinæ rationem.

Gregory Nazianzen:

ORAT. 17.

TO
THE PEOPLE OF HIS PASTORAL CARE,
AND TO ALL READERS
WHO AIM TO REGULATE THEIR LIVES BY RELIGIOUS RULES
THIS ATTEMPT
TO EXPLAIN THE DUTIES OF CITIZENS ACCORDING
TO CHRISTIAN ETHICS, IS AFFECTIONATELY
AND RESPECTFULLY
INSCRIBED BY
THE AUTHOR.

REV. WILLIAM ADAMS, D.D.

DEAR SIR:—Having listened with high gratification, to your excellent discourse on the application of Christianity to Civil Government, and feeling assured that an extensive distribution of it would be eminently useful, we take leave to request a copy of it for publication.

Very respectfully and truly,

Your Friends and obdt. Servts,

HIRAM KETCHUM.	A. FISHER.
JAMES BOORMAN.	R. T. HAINES.
BENJ. L. SWAN.	NORMAN WHITE.
S. S. HOWLAND.	JOSEPH B. VARMUM, JR.
W. R. CROSBY.	H. DWIGHT, JR.
AMORY GAMAGE.	F. F. MARBURY.
SAM. M. BLATCHFORD.	JOHN C. BALDWIN.
JOHN TENBROOK.	STEPHEN M. CHESTER.
CHARLES A. BULKLEY.	JAMES B. THOMPSON.
GEORGE BACON.	J. M. HALSTED.
A. R. WETMORE.	FREDERIC BULL.
DAVID LEAVITT.	JOSEPH HYDE.

GENTLEMEN:—I defer to your judgment in transmitting, for your disposal, the discourse which, in terms so kind, you have requested for publication. The substance of it, as some of you

may remember, was preached in June, 1848; long before any discussion had arisen in this country relative to the Fugitive Slave Law. The circumstances which gave rise to it were the remarkable revolutions then in progress in Europe. It seemed to me that Christianity could not look with indifference on those uprisings of patriotism and freedom; while her restraining power was greatly needed to prevent freedom from degenerating into anarchy.

It is well known to you that when the last Revolution in France was in progress, a host of theorists made their appearance, who proposed to take advantage of that event, for re-organising society on new and peculiar principles. Of the eleven men who were hastily called to the provincial government of that country, four were the prominent leaders of a party or sect, which, with several minor distinctions, passed under the general name of Communists. The smooth roots of speculation, all of a sudden, brought forth the stinging nettles of political peril and trouble. Interested as is my profession in every event relating to the happiness of man, I was at some pains to procure the principal French writers whose opinions had been most active in the new order of things, and acquaint myself with the Philosophy of those movements which contemplated great changes as to Social Inequalities, Labor, Tenure of Property, Law and Government. During the last year I prepared and delivered a series of Discourses on the application of Christianity to these social questions; under the sober conviction that the religion of the New Testament has promise of the "life that now is as well as of that which is to come;" that it is something more than a bridge to help us across the river of Death, even a light by which to journey, a hope by which to toil, a motive by which to live day by day; and that its oil is not merely for the extreme unction of the dying, but for rendering the limbs of the athlete supple and strong in the arena of present duty. When in this series of related topics the time arrived for introducing the subject of Civil Government, events had occurred in our own country which gave an unexpected interest to the subject, and a new application to the argument. So that while a part of the discourse was actually written with special reference to the changes going on in the Old World, a part was prepared with par-

ticular reference to events then transpiring under our own government.

I have no apology to make for introducing this topic into the sacred desk. "Preaching politics," as that expression is generally understood, is a habit to which neither judgment nor taste incline me; but the explication of a doctrine set forth distinctly and frequently in the very words of Inspiration, might be admitted to be within the proper province of the Christian ministry, even if we did not see its immediate bearing on the supremacy of religion and the substantial happiness of man.

At the time this discourse was first delivered (10 Nov.,) the pulpit, so far as my information extends, had made no expression of the views here exhibited. I could not then, as I might now, avail myself in the construction of my argument, of the better reasonings and reflections of many in my profession. As I would not presume to dictate to others so I have not borrowed my sentiments from others. That these should meet with universal approbation is more than I anticipate. I assume no infallibility and no authority; but shall be sufficiently gratified if it should be thought that, in the expression of my deliberate and independent sentiments, I have not violated the law of Christian meekness and modesty. I will not conceal that it has been a source of pleasure to me to be informed by some of our most intelligent fellow-citizens, who have listened to this discourse, that it has contributed its share for the relief of their minds on certain points where many are perplexed with the fear of going wrong. Should the same result be accomplished in other cases, it will be to me an occasion of devout joy.

I am, gentlemen, with very true regard,

Your friend and obedient servant,

W. ADAMS.

1870, 1871, 1872, 1873.

EMMA N.

DISCOURSE.

LET every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

—ROMANS xiii. 1—7.

THE subject suggested by this passage of inspired Scripture involves matters vital to human happiness. For long ages mankind have been theorizing and experimenting, toiling and suffering in their vain attempts to reach the truth pertaining to civil government. Extreme doctrines have been set forth on either side; inculcating abject submission and lawless freedom. Curious theories have been elaborated as to the origin and authority of government; the right and the wrong of undertaking any modifications of the ruling power; and it would seem that upon this subject the world had

“ever been learning and never been able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” At this present hour, the whole surface of civilized society is rolling and heaving, like the bosom of the sea, because of the internal forces which are at work pertaining to the uses and abuses of political power. Nor is this to be wondered at when we consider the immediate connection which subsists between the administration of the state, and the dearest rights, and highest interests of mankind.

We believe that the world never will arrive at a state of repose and satisfaction on this subject till the great principles relative to civil government contained in the Word of God are made the basis of human sentiment and practice. There must be an ethical osteology in the body politic. There must be a religious basis beneath the pillars of the state; nor will we ever believe that a subject so intimately related to the well-being of man is forever to be secularized away from Christian rule; and that because it would be indecorous for the teachers of religion to mingle in the petty affairs of party politics, therefore, they have no duty to perform, and no lessons to impart relative to the claims of government as derived from the Gospel of the Son of God.

Most of the theories which have been promulgated as to the origin and province of government, have been elicited by special and local questions; and accordingly they have, in most instances, been too partisan in their character and too meagre in their induction. A change in the government of

Berne led Louis Van Haller to conceive his remarkable theory concerning civil government. This may be the process by which truth is smelted out at last. A practical case arises in the administration of the state which elicits differences of opinion. Those opinions may be extreme and extravagant on either side ; but they excite thought ; they lead to comparisons and judgments ; and the effervescence of contrary qualities results in a third quantity, which is nearer the truth than either of the elements which entered into its composition.

It is impossible to deny that circumstances have arisen in our own country which lend to this subject an unusual interest and importance. Sentiments have been broached as to the proper province and prerogatives of government, as to obedience to government and resistance to government, as to the conflicting claims of private conscience and of public duty, which have agitated the country, and by which the minds of many well-meaning men have been sadly confused and perplexed. They are told on the one hand that it is a religious duty to obey governments, and they believe it : they hear much, on the other hand, of the worth and glory of a good conscience, the memory of Christian and patriotic martyrs, and they are convinced that somewhere there is a place and a right of resistance to political power, though they are sorely perplexed to discover and define it : and just in this unhappy, undecided, double-minded condition, multitudes of our own citizens are thrown at this very instant ; so that

our topic is one not of abstraction but practical and pressing importance.

Let me premise that my object is not to advocate or discuss any particular law; much less to promote any political measure. The ministry of religion knows "no man after the flesh." I do not propose to settle every point of casuistry; but, if possible, would state the broad principles of Revelation pertaining to the civil power; principles which may reconcile apparently incongruous sentiments, remove impending obscurities, and establish the identity between good citizenship and practical Christianity.

I begin with stating a few of the more obvious doctrines of the New Testament concerning civil government.

1. *Government—civil government is an ordinance of God, and as such is to be respected and obeyed.* The language of Scripture is very explicit. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God—and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." The bare mention of a passage like this plunges us, at once, into the midst of those great questions which have exhausted the wisdom of the prudent, and convulsed the world with changes. "In what sense is government ordained of God?" "Is the duty here enjoined a passive obedience to governments of all forms, and in all acts?" "Are no changes in

civil governments ever countenanced and aided by religion? Is resistance to political power in every case, an act of disloyalty to God? If exceptions are allowed—when, why, and what are they? Let us not be deterred by the difficulties which environ the subject upon which we are entering; for, with the Word of God, like a lamp, in our hand, we may take our way without fear of losing our path.

I repeat, then, the first and most obvious teaching of the New Testament, on this subject; *Government is ordained of God, for the welfare of his creatures, and as such is to be obeyed.* No mention is here made of the form in which government is to be administered. The expression is generic. “The powers that be,” “rulers,” “higher powers,” are the terms employed, without specifying their names, their office, or the mode of their appointment. Some government is essential to human happiness. Society could not exist without it. There must be restraint, law and order. A ruling power of some sort, under some name, there must be. This necessity exists independent of our choice. It grows out of that constitution of things which God himself has created. The theory of a social compact, as set forth by Rousseau in his famous work—“*Sur le Contrat Social*,” and adopted by other politico-philanthropic writers is alike visionary and atheistic. It is just such a theory as might have been expected from a man so vainly fond of paradox that, when the Academy of Dijon proposed the question, “Whether science and civ-

ilization were serviceable to human happiness," he was forward to espouse the negative side, though against his convictions of truth, because affording him a better opportunity to distinguish himself by startling novelties.

The Being who made us, made the necessity of law and government. Governments never did originate in the mere preference and contract of individuals, who, up to that time were without any government at all. Compacts, constitutions may, indeed, be framed by men, and between men, regulating the *form* in which government shall be administered; but the reality, the necessity of some government depends not at all upon human choice. Talk of a state of nature! When, where was there ever a tribe of uncivilized savages who did not recognize the necessity of some form of law among themselves, rude, barbaric though it was, hereditary or delegated, the will of the oldest, the richest,¹ or the strongest. The bloodiest pirate-ship that ever prowled on the windward station has its laws. There can be no association of men without them. There is a liberty which is fostered by the gospel, but that liberty is not lawlessness. The most frightful evil which Christianity teaches us to deplore, is anarchy and licentiousness. "Speaking evil of dignities," "despising governments," is an inspired description of the most dangerous of men. Men are not to be left in all things to follow their individual will. Related to others of their species, they are to be restrained by the beneficent power of public

law. The natural liberty of man is, in some respects, diminished by the necessary restraints of society. Human passions are to be confined within certain limits. There may be, there are, degrees of merit in the several forms in which government is administered ; but to destroy all government would make Mercy weep and Compassion mourn. Tiberius Cæsar was upon the throne when Jesus Christ paid the tribute which the Roman, in justice, could not claim. Nero was Emperor when Paul wrote to Titus—"Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates," and Peter wrote—"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the King as Supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil-doers, as free, and not using your liberty as a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God." It would, as we think, be a forced and artificial interpretation of the clause—*for the Lord's sake*, in this passage, to understand it as requiring obedience only to such enactments as are made from religious principle, with special regard to God's will. Nero was never suspected of enacting or executing any law from such a motive. Its obvious import is, that we should obey government from a principle of obedience to God. Not that Tiberius and Nero were good men ; not that a ruler cannot do wrong ; not that we are to approve of everything he does or requires ; but government, of which even bad men may be the agents—government is

an ordinance of God, and as such is to be honored as a necessary and benignant provision for human happiness. It may be abused; it may be perverted; (and of the remedies in such cases I am to speak hereafter), but all government must not and cannot be destroyed. The worst form of tyranny which ever lorded it over injured men, would be paradise in comparison with the entire destruction of all restraining and ruling power. Who, for all the gold that ever was coined, would venture himself and his family in Naples, in Madrid, in Paris, in New York, a single day, in the absence of all law, and government to protect him? We shudder at the thought of a vast population let loose to follow inclination unchecked and uncontrolled; their passions clashing in turbulent confusion, and destroying each other by the conflicts of physical force. The ruling power, says the gospel, is God's minister for good. Somewhere, under some name, in some form, there is a power which governs; yes, which *governs*; which holds the will of the individual in subjection to public laws. These laws may not be perfect, but the idea that every man is to be a law unto himself is Utopian, and unchristian. We look, with unspeakable interest, on the struggles of men in the Old World who are striving for a more liberal government, for laws more humane and just; we believe that the Gospel aids and encourages such aspirations and struggles (and it will be for me in the sequel to show how this influence of the Gospel is to be reconciled with the obedient spirit now under consideration) but wherever there are men

who have conceived the idea of demolishing all governments and all laws, lifting aloft the blood-red flag as the sign of universal anarchy—to them we say, the Gospel has no sympathy with licentiousness. The “*jus divinum*” of Kings may have been monstrously abused, but government is no invention of king-craft. Law is not a device of man. It is an ordinance of God. Its necessity is laid in infinite goodness, and never can it be abrogated. The God who made us has ordained that there should be a power—how appointed, how invested, I do not now say; a *power*—that is the word—not mere mawkish sentimentalism, but a power that wields the sword, a sword not of feather, not of lath, but of veritable steel, the symbol of authority which, in God’s name, shall punish the evil-doer, and stand as a barrier against wild and atrocious lawlessness. Brawling, riotous, ferocious resistance to all governments, is a sort of liberty which finds no favor from the spirit of Christianity. We should respect, revere, honor magistracy as the exponent of God’s legislation for human happiness. The more free our institutions, the more established our rights, the more we should honor the ruling power which protects and blesses us. A self-governed people should never fail in the sentiment of loyalty; for in the degree in which they are deficient here they rebuke and condemn themselves.

2. We are now prepared to advance to a second position, which is, that the Word of God, while it enjoins obedience to government, no where pre-

scribes the form in which that government shall exist: but has left this as a thing capable of improvement, to the experience and preference of men themselves, within the limits of certain general principles of equality and equity, liberty and law, which are, to the last degree, reasonable and essential.

This statement, if it can be verified, will dispose at once of a thousand questions, by which the minds of men have been embarrassed, in reference to this subject. For it has been the policy of despotism, in all ages, to make it appear that there is but one form of civil government sanctioned by heaven; that every attempt to change this is to be branded as impiety, and therefore, a revolutionary spirit is to be held, in all cases, as essentially atheistical and wicked. The world is full of books concerning the "*divine right of kings*": and the notion which prevailed for ages was, that God anointed kings as his exclusive agents and vicegerents; and therefore religion required passive obedience to them, however cruel, capricious, and unjust their demands.

We can readily understand how such notions have crept into English theology and English literature. In the reign of Henry VIII., when the king's proclamation had the force of law, Cranmer declared, in emphatic words,—I quote his own language—"that God had immediately committed to Christian princes the whole cure of all their subjects, as well concerning the administration of God's word, for the cure of souls, as concerning

the ministration of things political." In the reign of James I., Sir Robert Filmer, the author of the famous treatise on Patriarchal Government, asserted that the Supreme Being regarded hereditary monarchy, as opposed to any other form of government with exclusive favor, a theory which called forth the immortal treatise of Algernon Sidney, a legacy of wealth to the nations. James himself frequently enraged and alarmed his Parliament by telling them that they had no more business to inquire what he might lawfully do than what the Deity might lawfully do. The philosopher Hobbes, writing during the reign of Charles I., affirms that in a literal, not a metaphorical sense, kings are the representatives of God; lords of our faith and our lives, and authoritative interpreters of Scripture. "*L'etat c'est moi*,"—I am the state—said Louis the Fourteenth as he stalked into the hall of his Parliament, with a riding-whip in his hand. The same doctrine of the exclusive divine right of kings is asserted by Bishop Horsely in his celebrated sermon before the House of Lords in the year 1793; a discourse which awakened the indignant rebuke of Robert Hall in his eloquent "Apology for the Freedom of the Press and for General Liberty;" and I have perused a sermon, by a Protestant clergyman, in our own country, in which the extreme doctrine is, I will not say *argued* but *declared*, that to the duty of submission to an established government there are no limitations and no exceptions; that obedience in the state and obedience in things spiritual, are

parts of the same Christian virtue, and that those revolutions which we are accustomed to favor with our good wishes and aid, are in fact rebellion against that patient obedience to civil authority which is enjoined by God.

The weightiest matters, the most important inferences, therefore, are dependent upon the position we have assumed that the Word of God nowhere prescribes the precise form in which government shall be organized. Government in some form it recognizes as essential and divinely authoritative: but it nowhere instructs us that there is any one form to modify which would be disloyal to God.

“Does not Peter, in his general Epistle, require us to *honor the king*?” Unquestionably. Were we aiming at strict historical exactness, we should say that the Roman Emperors were republican magistrates named by the Senate; but royalty, kingship was the form in which government was embodied, when the Apostle Peter wrote his epistle: and Christianity, in all consistency, required its disciples to obey even a heathen monarch rather than rush into the fearful chaos of no government at all. But what has this fact to do with the question whether a better form of government might not be made in the place of that which then existed? The simple fact that our Lord and his disciples conformed to certain institutions existing in their day, in the absence of all specific directions, no more proves that we are to make those same institutions our model and our law, than that we are

to imitate, in every respect, their dress and domestic customs as Orientals. Paul wrote his epistles to the churches on parchment with a stylus; is this an argument to prove that we should never employ what is better—a printing press? The same Apostle coasted along Asia Minor, and pushed into the Adriatic in a ricketty and unseaworthy vessel, without a compass; is this a reason why we should not traverse the same waters in a steam-ship, by the aid of a binnacle? The Apostles practised obedience, on Christian principles, to the only form of civil government which then existed; is that an argument to prove that government is not susceptible of improvement, and that, in the progress of events, we may not frame one which is better?

“Did not God ordain a royal house over his ancient people?” Admit that it was so. Are we anywhere instructed that the same form of government is authoritatively prescribed for all times and all people? Look carefully at all the facts of the history. The form of government prescribed for the Jewish people was that of a republican commonwealth, with such legislation for equality and justice as might provoke the most profound admiration in this self-complacent age. But the people themselves were clamorous for a change. They saw the splendors of royalty in the nations which surrounded them; and longed to be like them. For this they were rebuked; they were forewarned of the consequences of their choice; but their passion being unappeasable, God gave

them a king in his wrath, because of their incorrigible wickedness: and the very words, *God save the King*, which England has adopted as her national anthem, were shouted by the people, when Saul was anointed king, under a solemn protest from the mouth of Samuel, who, in God's name, assured them that the permission allowed them was a rebuke and punishment for their folly in rejecting a government which was incomparably better. The language cannot, therefore, be employed as an inspired demonstration of the exclusive claims of royalty.

Admit that the form in which government is to be administered is prescribed in the Word of God, and that this exclusive form is royalty, and by that admission you make all improvements in government impossible; all revolutions in government acts of impiety; and all Christian patriots who have resisted despotism, rebels against heaven. The doctrine of Scripture is perfectly consistent with itself. Government is essential, and government is to be obeyed. But the form in which government is to be administered, and the spirit of its legislation admit of degrees of improvement. Law is not a stereotype letter which changes not from age to age, but a beneficent agent, which, in the gradual progress of Christian civilization, must conform itself more and more to the genial legislation of the gospel. Government is not a colossal figure, seated upon a throne of everlasting rock, holding the same old sceptre of iron, century after century,

never to be modified in form, dress, or utterance. The alternative of government or *no* government, never has been, and never will be presented to man. But the question whether a bad government may not be exchanged for a good one, and this for a better, is one which Christianity more than tolerates; itself proposes, and resolves. There is a sense in which it is perfectly proper and Christian to speak of "the divine right of kings;" and with equal propriety may we speak of the divine right of presidents and governors; the divine right of mayors and sheriffs; the divine right of constables and policemen; for these are *all* ministers of law; and God is not a God of confusion. but of order. Government is divinely appointed, inasmuch as it is conducive to human happiness. The world at the close of the first demiurgic day was better than chaos and old night. The tyranny of one, be that one Nero or Caligula, is better than the tyranny of ten thousand. A diseased eye is better than total blindness; for the diseased organ is susceptible of remedies. Remedies have been employed, defects have been supplied, evils have been corrected, and under the benignant influences of Christianity, civil government has been constantly improving, and it will improve till its whole form and spirit are accordant with the beneficent ends for which it was ordained of God. Governments are not the property of the officials by whom they are administered. They were ordained for the benefit of all; to use the very language of the New Testament, that we *may lead quiet and peaceable lives*;

and the wisdom of God is greatly to be admired in devolving so much the responsibility of deciding the form in which government shall be administered upon those for whose welfare it was ordained. Do not believe that passive obedience to odious tyranny, when a better administration is perfectly feasible, is the only Christian virtue. The Barons of Runnymede were not sinning against God, in securing chartered rights for their country; for these were better than the imperious will of King John or Henry III. Parliamentary reforms are not necessarily assaults upon Christianity. The old Continental Congress of the United States were not sinning against the Most High God, when they judged that they could erect for themselves a better form of government than any across the seas. George Washington was no rebel against his Maker for espousing the same opinion. When President Langdon, of Harvard University, put himself at the head of Col. Prescott's column on Cambridge Common, on the eve of the 17th of June, 1775, and offered up a devout prayer beneath the stars for the success of the expedition then starting for the neighboring heights of Charlestown, he was no Judas, treacherously leading a band with swords and lanterns against the Christ of God. Christianity is no indifferent spectator of the patriotic struggles and revolutions which aim at the reform of abuses. Her own spirit is in the wheels. And when Christianity holds up before the world this compendious doctrine: *Obey governments and make governments better*, she has pro-

mulgated a law, which, for its sublime simplicity and consistency challenges the homage and admiration of the world.

Most of the errors which prevail in our times, as to the organizations of society, are the offspring of a Pantheistic philosophy, which overlooks and neglects our *individuality*. Now the gospel of Christ reverses this order entirely. It commences its great reforms with the heart of the individual man. It begins not with the remote circumference—the nation, to work inward ; but at the heart of each individual and works outward to society.

You have observed, perhaps, with surprise, that the New Testament contains so few directions for rulers and Governments in their distinctive capacity. The reason is, that the directions which Heaven has enacted for the individual man, are capable of an extension and application to any number of men ; that is to society, to nations, and the world. Man is a microcosm ; a little world in himself. One man is the likeness and representative of every other. And the Supreme Being who has revealed all the legislation of the universe in ten precepts, and these epitomized in two : who has comprised the expression of all our lawful desires in one brief formula of prayer ; has, with the same sublime comprehension made known his will as to the Government of the world, in those few and simple principles which the gospel plants in the heart of a child. The government of God does not concern itself primarily and immediately with what is public and national. Its proper kingdom is the human soul.

This rectified, ennobled and blessed national prosperity flows from it as a legitimate consequence. God's method of making good governments is to make good men. Do you ask for the process of improvement? Briefly stated, it is as follows. First, the Gospel kindles the spirit of liberty. It supplies the individual with an adequate stimulus and motive power. It bursts like the morning sun on the statue of Memnon, and makes the motionless marble to sing. It puts beneath a dead and unthinking nature the mighty lever of Christian truth, and lifts man up in God's image, to do God's work. Clothed with the authority of the skies it comes to every man and says—"you are God's child, in God's image, whether in ebony or ivory; for you Christ died, for you the costly expenditures of redemption, and the mansions of glory." Taught the worth of his soul, man stands erect. He dilates with a great inspiration. An unknown importance attaches to his every act. New motives has he in the education of his offspring, the acquisition of property, in the maintenance of his rights. Freedom there will be—for such a man must have room in which to live and work. Before this quickening, ennobling power of religion, there must be uprising against wrongs, abuses must be reformed, oppression must be resisted, and he who has learned that he is to sit on a throne in heaven, will have no tyrant's foot upon his neck while he lives on the earth.

The more you rouse the energies of man—the more of impetus you apply—the more needful is the power of control and restraint. Give to man

nothing but stimulated strength and he is a maniac, burning, breaking, tearing, destroying whatever is in his path. Restrained he must be. But how? Christianity puts the power of control in the very heart which it rouses to life. It makes the man the master of himself. Not one whit does it abate from the spirit of liberty and of life. It does not clog him with weights, nor cripple him with blows, nor cage him within prison-bars; but it puts law in the heart and conscience at the helm. By one ray of celestial light, Christianity solves all the problems which for ages perplexed the whole subject of civil government. Addressing its spiritual teachings to the individual, it makes him loyal to God, puts in his heart the love of justice, liberty, and virtue; makes him at once free and obedient; bold, earnest, courageous, yet acquiescent with his whole soul, in the wholesome laws which look at equity, righteousness, order and peace. It is not true, that despotism and lawlessness are the only alternatives presented to man. Christianity, by its intermediate and conservative power, changes the whole aspect of this controversy. It teaches man how to reform without destroying; how to resist wrong without practising wrong; to find liberty and hold himself back from licentiousness; to advance yet always in the right direction; to make progress, yet always steadying himself by stern faith in truth, in duty and in God. When God put the planets in motion, they were not left with the impetus of a single force. The centrifugal and centripetal were so combined as to make them move in regular and harmonious orbits.

Man, started on his career by the conscious spirit of liberty and power, you might think, was like a comet threatening to burn the earth ; but obedient to the same power which projected him into being, he turns at the right point and comes back around his centre in a beautiful circle of light and blessedness. Taught by the religion of Christ, he carries in his own bosom a combination of forces, impelling and restraining, stimulating and controlling, and he stands before you in all the power and beauty of a *self-governed man*. Man must be governed ; by physical force, if not by internal principles. Begin, as God does, with the heart of individual man ; acquaint him with his destiny, and qualify him for it ; and you may leave all other questions to an easy, natural, and inevitable solution. Thus is it that Christianity enlightens, modifies, and improves the governments of the world, as its power increases over the hearts and minds of individuals. It turns blind submission into rational obedience ; tempers the passion for liberty with the love of order, and places mankind in a happy medium between the extremes of anarchy on the one hand, and oppression on the other ; and when this slowly-advancing power of Christianity is universal, there will be order, peace, liberty, and righteousness throughout the world.

These general principles conceded, a practical question is already answered : ‘ May human governments ever be resisted ? ’ Unquestionably. You cannot deny it without condemning all the Christian patriots who have lived and died in a righteous cause. If governments may be modified and im-

proved, of course, there are cases in which they may be resisted, even forcibly, if necessary; a bitter medicine, actual cautery, or amputation being indispensable to save life. Our American Revolution, for example, can be justified on Christian principles. We cannot go so far as Bishop Berkley, that genial and generous man, and acute reasoner, who has undertaken to demonstrate that it is as much our duty to submit to the most ferocious tyrant, as to submit to the supreme benevolence of God; or rather that to obey such a tyrant is to obey Supreme Benevolence.

We exclaim with Pope:

“ Who first taught souls enslav’d, and realms undone,
The enormous faith of many made for one,
That proud exception to all nature’s laws,
To invert the world and counterwork its cause ! ”

The divine right and authority of government resides in its tendency to promote the peace, protection, order, and happiness of society. This is the object of God’s benevolence; and whatever secures this has the sanction of his will. Government possesses this divine right only as tending to public happiness. It is instrumental and not primary, mediate and not ultimate; and when the public happiness, instead of being, on the whole promoted by obedience, would, upon the whole, where every consequence indirect as well as direct is taken into account, be promoted by shaking off that power which is inconsistent with its great object, remonstrance, even rebellion itself, if that name can fitly be given in such cir-

cumstances of dreadful necessity, to the expression of the public will, has more truly its divine rights than established authority, when forgetful of that end and object for which God has sanctioned it at all.

“The speculative line of demarcation where obedience ought to end, and resistance must begin is,” as Mr. Burke truly says, “faint, obscure, and not easily definable. It is not a single act, or a single event which determines it. Governments must be abused and deranged, indeed, before it can be thought of; and the prospect of the future must be as bad as the experience of the past. When things are in that lamentable condition, the nature of the disease is to indicate the remedy, to those whom nature has qualified to administer in extremities, this critical, ambiguous, and bitter potion to a distempered state. Times and occasions and provocations will teach their own lessons. The wise will determine from the gravity of the case; the high-minded from disdain and indignation at abusive power in unworthy hands; the brave and bold from the love of honorable danger in a generous cause; but with or without right, a revolution will be the very last resource of the thinking and the good.”

“The last resource of the thinking and the good!” says this eloquent writer, but still a resource! And when the necessity occurs, in which the Christian patriot, ‘before obedient to the ruling power, feels that he has now another duty to perform, when he sees with sorrow that a cause which is good in itself will demand the use of means,

from which, with any other motive, he would have shrunk with abhorrence; he will lift his voice sadly indeed, but still loudly; he will lift his arm with reluctance, but when it is lifted, he will wield it with all the force which the thought of the happiness of his country and of the world, as, perhaps, dependent upon it will inspire;’ for Christian benevolence has made a calculation in which his own happiness, and his own life are not to be counted as elements. If he emerges from the struggle successful, like our own Washington, in the serene evening of his days, he may look back with manly and permitted melancholy at the sacrifices and sufferings which the struggle has cost; and upward, too, with Christian gratitude and joy, at the **HIGHER GOOD**, and the **GREATER HAPPINESS**, present and prospective, which the dread necessity of the sword has secured; and thus Christianity vindicates the righteousness of the cause.

Some may be disappointed if we stop at these general principles. They press us with the question, whether there is not a Power and an authority higher than human government; and whether we are not under an obligation to obey the former in all cases, whenever it comes into conflict and collision with the latter. That question, my brethren, has but one side. I speak as an American citizen, and as a Christian minister. Stated in this form, it admits of no discussion. We are a Christian people. We are not a nation of atheists. We cannot deny the existence and supremacy of God. This question of the supre-

macy of the Almighty, in its naked, abstract form, never was presented in any legislation to the American people. If it were, it would be decided with wonderful unanimity. The people of France once presumed to decide the question; and they pronounced the infatuated opinion that there was no God; and the pressure of divine law taken off, volcanic explosions and earthquakes ensued, the rumblings and reverberations of which have not yet ceased. We must not be drawn into a false issue. The minds of many good men have been thrown into a false position. They have really thought that it was a matter of debate whether there was a Power higher than human government. They know, they feel that there is a God, greater, wiser, and better than man. We all believe it. You must not deny it, or doubt it. If you take for your premises a denial of this truth, imbedded in our hearts, your logic and your legislation will surely be refuted. We cannot admit that, at this period of time, this truth is to be debated. We drew it in with our mother's milk. Our bones are full of the strength of it. It has been taught us in our homes, in our schools, in our churches. The supremacy of God is recognized in our courts of justice, in our halls of legislation, in every judicial oath, in all the solemn forms in which government is administered. It rests as the foundation stone of our Republic, and it cannot be dug up or disturbed.

Prove to us a Christian people what God would have us to do, and our duty is plain. Convince us, by infallible evidence, that God demands a speci-

fic act, and we will do it, though it leads us to lion's dens, or furnaces of fire. We will dare to do it in the face of all interdicts, of all opposition, even, as Luther said when on his way to Worms, if there were as many devils in our path, as tiles upon the houses.

But the real question, and the only question which can arise among a religious people is this: what IS the will of God? How shall we arrive at a knowledge of what God requires of us in a particular case? The general direction is given us in the inspired Scriptures by God himself, that we must obey Government: not for wrath, that is, through fear of punishment, but for "*conscience sake*." Before you can bring the sanction of God's name to countenance resistance to human law, it is incumbent on you to show, by substantial and satisfactory proof that the authority of God requires that resistance. Perhaps you are mistaken. It may be that you are misinformed and have misjudged. The question is; whether the will of God requires or does not require you to obey the civil law. It is a "*petitio principii*,"—a begging of the whole question—to justify your resistance to human law, on the ground of obedience to a Divine law; unless you can furnish adequate proof that the divine law compels you to that resistance. That is the question, the only question, and the whole question that can be presented to a patriotic and Christian citizen. Convince us by infallible proof, that God requires of us to oppose, at all lengths, a given law, then we will oppose it manfully and courageously.

But how do you prove this? By what process do you arrive at such an authoritative and infallible conviction? This is the whole gist of the subject. When Peter and John, (a case so often cited, and as often perverted,) refused obedience to the Jewish Sanhedrim, who had prohibited their preaching—saying so gallantly and courageously, “whether it is right in the sight of God, to hearken unto God, or unto men, judge ye;” they had infallible, they had Supreme authority to justify their resistance. Their Divine Lord, the personification of divine law had commanded them to do that definite and distinctive thing. It was not a matter of doubtful propriety, of uncertain inference with them, what to do; that one thing—to preach the gospel—remission of sins in the name of Christ, they were positively directed to do. The same Being, who created governments, and requires us to honor and obey them, commanded them, in explicit terms, to do that very thing, even though opposed by kings, governors and councils. Their noble conformity to that command was justified by the very highest authority; and they went on calmly, fearlessly doing their Lord’s will; and when the wrath of kings waxed hot against them they were meekly ready for the sacrifice, and unresistingly bowed their necks to the sword.

But the question is, how we, with no Divine Lord and Master at our side, to instruct and authorize us in every given case, how we shall be sure that we have the sanction of God in a religious opposition to any human law? Do you say that *feeling*—your own feelings, instruct you as to what God would have you to do? But feelings

are of contrary qualities. They differ in different men. They depend very much upon habits of association and education. Your feelings may be right or wrong. We would have you to prove to us that they are right. In obedience to the law of God, the feelings of the heart are all and everything. Outward service, with no concurrence of the heart, is impious mockery. But it is otherwise in respect of human enactments. It is no sin to feel that they are imperfect. But the separate question of duty still recurs, must not the law be obeyed, notwithstanding the feelings oppose it? Which shall be ascendant, principle or impulse?

Is your *conscience* a correct exponent of God's will and law? Here we have need of the most careful analysis, the most cautious discriminations. We are all accustomed to admit that the man who follows a good conscience, in a good cause, even unto death, is the noblest of his race. Such a man is above your pity, above your jest. But the glory of the act lies in the emphasis of the qualifying word, a *good* conscience and a *good* cause. Therefore to infer that *every* conscience, in *every* cause is the highest law for human conduct is a most perilous sophism. We read in the Word of God of an *evil* conscience, a *weak* conscience and a *defiled* conscience. What is Conscience? I will not delay or perplex you with the metaphysics of the schools. I will not pronounce whether it is an *act* of the mind or a *faculty* of the mind. I will not say whether it is an original or a derived faculty. If the latter, I will not trace its pedigree, or decide which theory was right, that of Adam

Smith or of Sir James Mackintosh. A more general answer will suffice ; it is the mind itself, pronouncing judicially upon its own acts. It is the testimony of the mind approving actions which it thinks to be good, and reproaching itself with those it believes to be evil. It is the judgment of the mind in view of certain rules. It does not originate the rule. It is not the legislative power that enacts laws, but the judicial power that decides on our conformity to law. It is a faculty which itself needs to be instructed. A sun-dial can be of no use except it be fixed by a true meridian ; and even then the old fashioned inscription is verified, “Nihil sine lumine”—Useless without the sun. Clothe every conscience with the authority of law, if it be not rightly instructed, it is the ringleader in mischief. Saul of Tarsus verily thought within himself that he *ought* to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus. As the conscience is the mind itself, and the mind is the man, the man may be ignorant, he may be imbecile, he may be prejudiced, he may be wilfully ignorant, he may be self-interested and self-willed ; he may have a small share of that wisdom that “looketh before and after,” and, consequently, his opinion cannot be authoritative to himself or to another. Sincerity of judgment is no proof of its correctness. “There is a way that *seemeth* right to a man, but the end thereof is death.” He *ought* to know more and judge better than he does.

Because there is a sweetness and a glory in the testimony of a good conscience, acting in religious matters, under the clear light and positive teach-

ings of Revelation, many infer, most fallaciously, that there is a sacredness and divine authority even in their errors of judgment if they but endow them with the name of conscience.

Nemo suae mentis motus non æstimat æquos
Quodve volunt homines, se bene velle putant.

There is no truth in Theology more clearly defined than the necessity of informing, instructing, and regulating the conscience by correct rules. A man who is conscientious in doing wrong is the most dangerous of his race. He has the propelling power without the helm or the brake. So far as the conscience is *accurately* informed, by the light of nature, or by the Revelation of God, it is of use and value ; but the weight to be attached to the judgment of an individual on other matters, even though it passes by the name of conscience, is to be proportioned to our estimate of his intelligence, wisdom and goodness. As Jeremy Taylor has expressed it, in that Thesaurus of philosophy and erudition, the “Ductor Dubitantium,” “a man may be conducted by an abused conscience, so long as the legislative reason is not conjoined to the judge conscience, that is, while by unapt instruments we suffer our persuasions to be determined.” Beyond the fact that a man follows his own conscience there lies another question, ‘Is his conscience **RIGHT** ? Is it correct, true, and good ?’ A good conscience is one that is intelligently acquiescent with the will of God. The question then immediately recurs, how do we know in a given case, not defined in the Revealed Word, what

the will of God is? We have no Urim and Thummim to furnish us with an infallible decision. We have no Holy of Holies from which the voice of God proceeds in audible directions. We have no visible Form of supreme law to whom we may go as the disciples to Christ, saying "Lord, what wilt thou have us to do?" who will resolve for us every point of casuistry by an infallible interpretation. We do not believe in any Pope as the vicegerent of God. The Pantheist is perfectly consistent when he makes the instinct, the feeling of the individual man the supreme law, for his language is that 'man is God,' and according to him the idea of mistake or wrong is an absurdity. But we believe in man's personality and individuality, moreover in his errors and sins.

I will not shrink from the responsibility of answering this question; how may we hope to arrive at the knowledge of God's will, and what are the elements of a good conscience?

We arrive at that high conviction by the calm exercise of our own reason; by intelligent thinking; by honest judgments, and by the use of all human and *inspired* wisdom which we can command. It will not be communicated to us miraculously. We must think; we must study; we must compare; we must judge; we must pray. We must take the Word of God, and inquire how this or that course of conduct will square with this divine and infallible law. Perhaps we shall not all be perfectly agreed in our judgments. There are different degrees of intelligence, comprehension, honesty and candor among men. So long as differ-

ences of capacity and character exist, there will be differences of opinion. Perfect unanimity of sentiment is not to be expected in a world of imperfection. We arrive at ultimate truths by a long process of discussions and experiments; it may be, by mistakes and corrections, but truth is the ultimate result if candor and kindness are at the helm.*

Now, in forming our opinion as to the will of God, in a particular case, where definite instructions are withheld, there is one consideration, which must be our religious guide. It is an inseparable element of a *good* conscience in distinction from a *rash, prejudiced, or ignorant* conscience. That is an intelligent **LOOKING AT CONSEQUENCES.**†

* No shadow of ambiguity can rest upon the course to be pursued by one who receives religious principles at large, or particular instructions *immediately from Heaven*, and who is commanded to promulgate what he has so learned. Whosoever has a commission of this sort may calmly discharge his duty, and may leave all consequences to Him who has foreseen every contingency. This being obvious, it seems not less so that the absence of miraculous attestations ought to make some difference in the conduct, or at least in the style of those who insist upon conformity to their opinions. If the man who derives his opinions simply (by his own confession) from his personal study of the scriptures, and who has enjoyed none but ordinary aids, and who can advance no pretensions which other men may not also challenge, is entitled to speak in the tone, and to exercise the authority of a prophet or apostle, then where was the necessity of the extraordinary powers with which prophets and apostles were endowed?

We should not for a moment hold controversy with a man

† A right conscience is that which guides our actions by right and proportioned means to a right end.—DUCTOR DUBITANTIUM.

I know that it is fashionable in some quarters, to cry out against the philosophy of *expediency*, as if it were synonymous with a mean, *time-serving* policy. Society has not a greater danger to apprehend than that which arises from this one mistake. I cannot 'take it for granted,' all at once, that any law is to be resisted, and resisted forcibly, without looking at the consequences of that resistance. These I must weigh and compare, in forming my judgment as to what the will of God is. Give me an express command from the mouth of the Lord, and I have nothing to do with consequences. Should the edict be as from the King of Babylon, that no man should pray, we would do as Daniel did, for God has commanded us to pray. But in the absence of specific directions, in cases confessedly intricate and involved how may I know

whether he ought or ought not to promulgate the will of God *when he knows it*, and to challenge the obedience of all men to that will. This duty is granted, but we may surely ask him to exhibit his credentials. We shall be the first to submit to his dictation, when we have actually seen the seal of heaven in his hand, and are satisfied on the capital point of his divine legation.

The occult and fundamental principle of all religious rancour, and fanaticism, whether it be avowed or not, is this *assumption* of *divine authority* in behalf of what is simply an individual opinion. "I THINK so" is the whole residuum that can be found after evaporating the prodigious pretensions of the zealot demagogue. What is this will of God? This authority of Heaven? This sacred cause of Truth and Righteousness? Nothing, absolutely nothing more than "I THINK so." Strip the schismatic declamation of its finery and its sublimity, of its thunder and its fire, and there remains just this meagre and scarcely visible particle, the intrinsic value of which it would be impossible to express.—SATURDAY EVENING. *Art. Charity and Conscience.*

what the will of God is, but, among other things, by a sagacious and benevolent comparison of effects and results. Without this, so far as they come within the range of my judgment, I am a blind man; and I am striking in the dark. The great law of Christian expediency is the law of God's own kingdom; and may be defined as the using of the best means for the best ends. Those ends must come under my consideration as an intelligent Christian. Imperfections, incidental evils may be in the way, but in studying to know my duty as a Christian, I forswear my reason, if I do not calmly and solemnly measure results.

Admitting that the right of revolution resides in every people; that those for whose advantage government was instituted, possess the right to modify the form of that government, or resist its action when needful for their greater good; it must be the first question to be decided, whether the proposed change or resistance does involve that greater good, the prospect of which alone justifies the change. That question has been revolved and decided by every martyr and patriot who ever suffered for freedom and for truth. It is the settlement of that one question which makes the difference between a patriotic revolution, and lawless rebellion. That was the question which was agitated and decided in Great Britain in 1688. The leaders of the people saw the perils of revolution. They took into account, on the one hand, all the evils and all the hopes which attended a change; and on the other hand, all the evils and advantages there were in a continued succession. Weighing these together, they decided that the

evils they endured and must endure under the reign of the bigoted James, more than counter-balanced all the advantages which could accrue from his administration of the state. Looking into futurity, acting for posterity as well as for themselves, they decided that the interests of the Protestant religion, that the general order, stability, and happiness of the country required a change in the government, and the adoption of a new succession. The action had regard beyond incidental evils to an ultimate good. The action was justified by Christian expediency, and so was one, as we believe, which secured the favor and blessing of God.

The same question was revolved and resolved by our fathers in their memorable struggle for independence. They were burdened with evils. They sought their removal. They petitioned, they remonstrated. By all legal and prescribed methods they sought for relief and redress. At length the question stared them full in the face, whether, painful as it was, difficult as it was, it was not better, on the whole, for their posterity, for their country, and for the world, to forego all connection with the mother country and establish a new government for themselves. That question was decided, thoughtfully, calmly, solemnly, prayerfully. We believe it was decided wisely; that it was decided in accordance with the will of God; for it was decided according to Christian expediency; the endurance of incidental evil for an ultimate greater and more glorious good. That same question is to be met, answered, decided intelligently by every man, before he is justified in resistance to government and law. I do not say

that the case cannot arise in which resistance is justifiable. Far am I from affirming that human laws cannot be wrong, and that we must always give to them an indiscriminate approval. But when the question of duty arises as to acquiescence or resistance, and I set myself to quadrature my conscience with the will of God, I must, in the absence of definite directions, in settling and deciding what is right and what is duty, take into account the consequences which follow my decision. The divine right of government is in its tendency to public happiness; and the divine right of resistance is to be inferred from the tendency of that resistance to a greater happiness than could follow acquiescence; and until that tendency is made clear and certain, he that resisteth the power resisteth God.

Both of the Revolutions from which I have drawn my illustrations derive all their splendor from the great principle on which they rest, that *the public good is the great end of government*.

As to the question of the *constitutionality* of any law; that belongs not to the department of Christian ethics. That is a matter of simple legal and judicial decision. When the inquiry is raised, is this or that enactment legal and constitutional, we refer it to the proper tribunal for investigation. The language of the town clerk of Ephesus to the vociferous mob that would have done violence to Paul was truly sensible. "Ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly; the law is open, and there are deputies; let them implead one another." Be thankful to God that you live in a land where questions of law are not decided arbitrarily by the will of an individual; but in open court, with

prescribed modes, with fair investigation, free discussion, the solemn forms of justice, and where proper redress is available for all obnoxious legislation. Each and every man undertaking to decide for himself what is legal and what is obligatory is anarchy; ruinous to man, and hateful to God. Prove yourself a Christian citizen by referring that interpretation to those whose province and duty it is to decide.

That decision being given, and the law proved to be law—you ask again what is your duty on Christian and ethical principles, in reference to a law which you dislike: I answer unhesitatingly; obedience to law, till such time as you can make it sure that the evils which that law entails so far overbalance all the good which obedience to law secures, that you are justified in resistance, for the sake of a surer, a higher, and a greater good. We do not say that the law itself may not be distasteful to your sensibilities; we do not say but that you may regret the necessity of its enactment; we do not forbid you to deplore the circumstances which gave it existence; we do not forbid you to use all proper means to substitute a law which is better; we do not deny the right of private judgment, nor the right of resistance, nor the right of revolution; but in God's name, we do insist, before that last right be resorted to, and as you would justify your resistance on Christian principles, that you should convince yourself and convince others, that the benefits to be secured by resistance or revolution, are vastly greater than any which follow acquiescence under constitutional order and security. To this narrow point we must come at last. You

must not begin with natural rights and abstract rights, and push them in a blind, headstrong manner, in straight lines; for society is organized with a modification of our natural rights; and the advantages of a well-organized and well-governed social state are secured by the sacrifice of individual interests and personal preferences; and the question is, whether this state and order of things is not better than the resolution of society into its original elements (if such a thing were possible), each individual being left to assert and defend his own rights, in his own way, and by his own strength.

Our Divine Lord beheld the sufferings of his countrymen under Roman oppression. Jewish taxation was farmed out in a way to occasion the Jewish nation unprecedented suffering. The Pharisees, designing to entrap him, asked whether it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar. "Of whom," asked he in calmest majesty, "do you take tribute; of children, or of strangers?" They say "of strangers." Then, replied he, are the **CHILDREN FREE**. But he did not take his stand on this natural right and refuse the tribute. Acquiescence even in an unjust law, was better than any advantage which could be attained by a premature, inopportune, and abortive resistance. So he sent to the sea and procured the coin for himself and his disciples. A beautiful illustration, we must all admit, of the great law of Christian expediency. Let the best thing be done, that can be done, in given circumstances.

Certainly it is your *right* to eat meat, but for "meat do not destroy the work of God." The absence of all imperfection, of all defect, is more than can be demanded of anything human. But do

not destroy life for the sake of remedying blindness, deafness, or lameness. Do not demolish the temple for the sake of repairing a defect in its facade. Do not break the costly vase because of an unseemly stain on its surface. Do not overturn law and government to remove an incidental evil. If the evil, in your sober judgment, in your calm and religious reason, is so vast, so accumulative, so progressive, as to throw into shade all the benefits which accrue from a government administered according to charters and constitutions, the course before you is plain. The right of resistance is yours. The right of revolution is yours. But **BEWARE THAT YOU DO NOT MAKE A MISTAKE.** Interests too vast, too solemn, for ourselves and the world are at stake, to justify rashness. In other matters you may trifle ; but you must not trifle here. Mistakes elsewhere may be innocent ; but they are not innocent here.

Do evils of such helpless, hopeless, overshadowing enormity exist in our own country, and under our own government, that resistance, the “ last resource of the thinking and the good ” is necessary ? Evils there are. But are they of such a character as to overbalance the good ? Slavery is an evil. We allow no man to surpass us in our utter detestation of the system. It existed in the country when our stern-souled fathers were called to frame the government. It existed by no choice or fault of theirs. When deliberating as to the formation of a constitution they were compelled to recognize the existence of an evil which they deplored ; just as in using steel for a lever you must allow for its natural properties, its permanent elasticity.

The good notwithstanding the evil, when that evil is unavoidable and incidental. They have transmitted to us a priceless heritage, though the evil still inheres. Would to God that it never had existed. But can we soberly, intelligently, and religiously decide that it is so great, intolerable, and incurable, that we are justified in defying law, tearing the constitution, revolutionizing the government; risking the advantages enjoyed by us and our children, for the sake of its removal?

Every man, I think, will pause ere he rushes on such a decision. Circumnavigate the globe; where do you find a government better than our own; one which better answers the ends of government! Go to Madrid, to Vienna, to Constantinople, to Rome, to Petersburg, to Rio Janeiro, to Mexico, and be thankful for your own chartered, free and liberal government. It is the product of long history, of ancient events, ages of human experience. The roots of it lie back in the eventful scenes of other centuries. The scholar's lamp, the patriot's scaffold the martyr's cell, the Christian's prayers, all the hopes of good men in ages past have been converging, in the sweeping current of history, to the production of these liberal yet secure institutions in which we rejoice. I see the forms of our own fathers, wise in counsel, valiant in deed, Christian in purpose, who won for us the battle, and bequeathed to us the heritage. I see the ministers of God, whose spirits walked on every field of conflict, and whose prayers and preaching brought down the sanctions of religion to a cause which never could have triumphed had it not been good. All these come

thronging back, peopling the air, as if incapable of enjoying their repose, while any uncertainty overhangs the fruit of their sufferings and toils. I see the eyes of millions from every part of the world turned towards us, eagerly watching the great experiment of self-government. I see the exiled and the sad from every land hastening for shelter to our shores; finding liberty, home, and hope, beneath the protection of wholesome laws. I see the unparalleled blessings which Divine Providence has conferred upon us in the past, the present, and which open before us in the future. I see a nation of freemen, stretching from state to state, from sea to sea; free thought, free labor, free religion, a free Bible; schools, homes and churches; a nation involving in its success the hopes of the world. Then I turn my tearful eye to that dark spot in our history—that great mystery of Providence; but I seem to see “the stars in their courses fighting” against it. I feel that the evil is subordinate and incidental; not primary and intentional; and comparing evil with good, the smile of gladness will shine through the tears of my regret. I cannot, I dare not, I will not take the torch of Erostratus and apply it to a temple which is the wonder of the world, and a glory unto God. I will wait. I will hope. I will pray. My faith in God bids me be calm, patient, hopeful; believing that trials will consolidate our institutions, wisdom and goodness will perfect them, and that, with God’s blessing, they will stand for us, for our children and children’s children, a beneficent shelter and guardianship for an intelligent, industrious, contented, united, Christian people, to the end of time.



GOD'S OWNERSHIP OF THE SEA.



A

SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

Central Congregational Church,

PROVIDENCE, R. I.,

OCTOBER 7, 1860.

BY REV. LEONARD SWAIN, D. D.

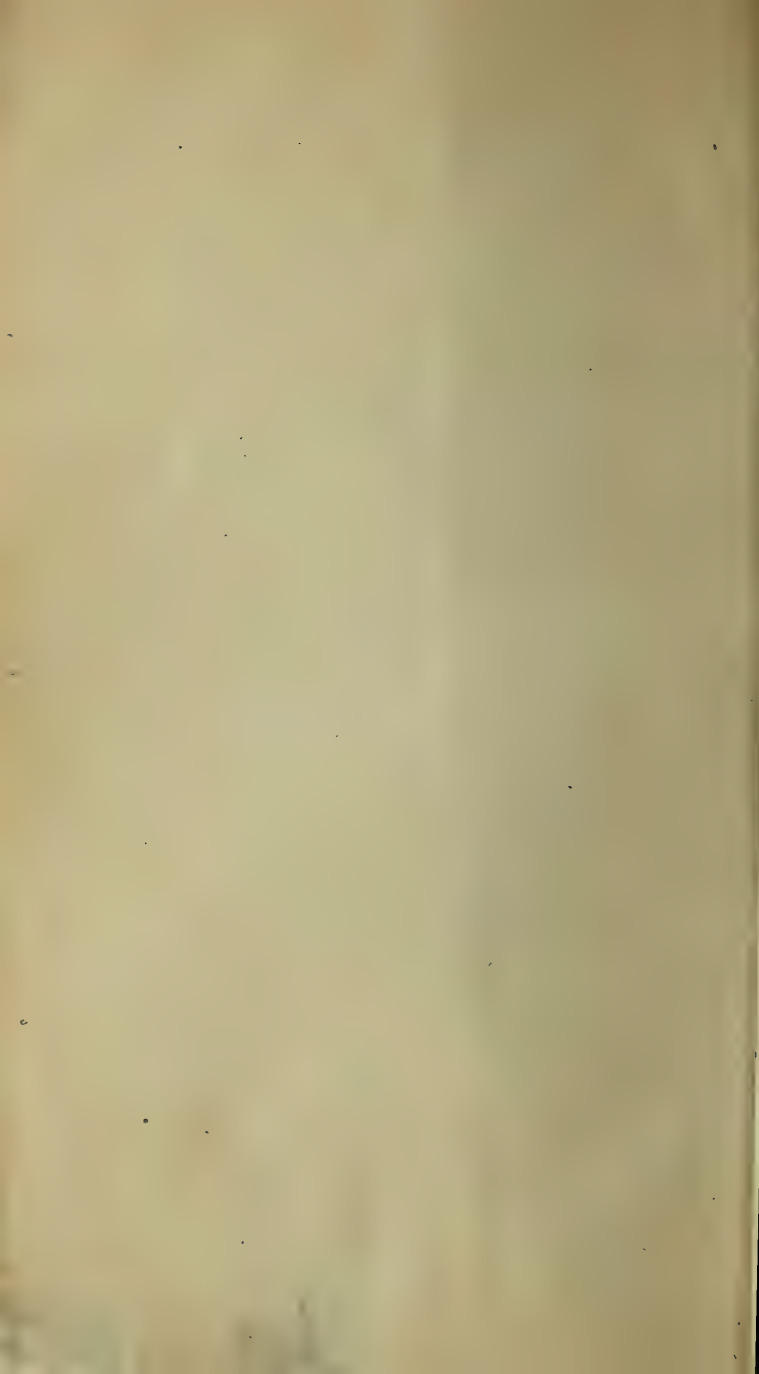
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S E R M O N .

Psalm xcv, 5—"THE SEA IS HIS, AND HE MADE IT."

The traveler who would speak of his experience in foreign lands, must begin with the sea. Especially is this the case if he would speak of his journey in its religious aspects and connections. For it is through the religion of the sea that he approaches those lands, and through it that he returns from them. God has spread this vast pavement of his temple between the hemispheres, so that he who sails to foreign shores must pay a double tribute to the Most High ; for through this temple he has to carry his anticipations as he goes, and his memories when he returns. Nor can the mind of the traveler be so frivolous, or the objects of his journey so trivial, but that the shadows of this temple will make themselves felt upon him during the long days that he is passing beneath them on his outward, and then again on his homeward, way. The sea speaks for God ; and however eager the tourist may be to reach the strand that lies before him and enter upon the career of business or pleasure that awaits him, he must check his impatience during this long interval of approach, and listen to the

voice with which Jehovah speaks to him as, horizon after horizon, he moves to his purpose along the aisles of God's mighty tabernacle of the deep.

God's way is in the sea as it is in the sanctuary ; and having so recently come from beholding it, that the roll of the ship and the roar of the waves are scarcely yet vanished from my brain, let me speak to you of it in His house to-day ; that so His works may combine with His word to teach us the lessons of His greatness, and that some strains of that vast anthem of the deep that praises God round the whole world this morning may mingle with the worship which rises to him from this sanctuary.

In speaking of God's ownership of the sea, I wish to consider, first, some of the more important material uses which he has made of it to subserve in the economy of nature and for the welfare of the world, and then to refer to some of those more distinctively religious elements of impression by which it becomes the symbol of His presence and the earthly temple of His glory.

It is very natural, in looking at the ocean, and in traveling over its enormous breadth, to wonder why such an immense mass of water should have been created. When we think that three-fourths of the entire surface of the globe are covered by its waves, it seems to us like a vast disproportion. It is a common thing, in speaking of the sea, to call it "a waste of waters." It seems as if it were a mere desert, incapable of being turned to any profitable use, and as if it would have been much

better were its vast hollows filled up with solid land, and its immeasurable area covered with fields and forests, waving with harvests and resounding with the noise of cities and the busy life of men.

But this is a mistake. Instead of being an incumbrance or a superfluity, the sea is as essential to the life of the world as the blood is to the life of the human body. Instead of being a waste and desert, it is the thing which keeps the earth itself from becoming a waste and desert. It is the world's fountain of life and health and beauty; and if it were taken away, the grass would perish from the mountains, the forests would crumble on the hills, the harvests would become powder on the plains, the continents would be one vast Sahara of frost and fire, and the solid globe itself, scarred and blasted on every side, would swing in the heavens as silent and dead as on the first morning of creation.

1. Water is as indispensable to all life, whether vegetable or animal, as is the air itself. From the cedar on the mountains to the lichen that clings to the wall; from the mastodon that pastures on the forests to the animalcule that floats in the sun-beam; from the leviathan that heaves the sea into billows to the microscopic creatures that swarm a million in a single foam-drop; all alike depend for their existence on this single element, and must perish if it be withdrawn. But this element of water is supplied entirely by the sea. All the waters that are in the rivers, the lakes, the foun-

tains, the vapors, the dew, the rain, the snow, come alike out of the ocean. It is a common impression that it is the flow of the rivers that fills the sea. It is a mistake. It is the flow of the sea that fills the rivers. The streams do not make the ocean, but the ocean makes the streams. We say that the rivers rise in the mountains and run into the sea ; but the truer statement is, that the rivers rise in the sea and run to the mountains ; and that their passage thence is only their homeward journey to the place from which they started. All the water of the rivers has once been in the clouds ; and the clouds are but the condensation of the invisible vapor that floats in the air ; and all this vapor has been lifted into the air by the heat of the sun playing upon the ocean. Most persons have no impression of the *amount* of water which the ocean is continually pouring into the sky, and which the sky itself is sending down in showers to refresh the earth. If they were told that there is a river above the clouds equal in size to the Mississippi or the Amazon ; that this river is drawn up out of the sea, more than a mile high ; that it is always full of water, and that it is more than twenty-five thousand miles in length, reaching clear round the globe, they would call it a very extravagant assertion. And yet not only is this assertion substantially true, but very much more than this is true. If all the waters in the sky were brought into one channel, they would make a stream more than fifty times as large as the Mississippi or the Amazon.

How many rivers are they in the sky? Just as many as there are on the earth. If they were not first in the sky, how could they be on earth? If it is the sky that keeps them full, then the sky must always have enough *to* keep them full; that is, it must always be pouring down into them just as much as they themselves are pouring down into the sea. It is computed that the water which falls from the clouds every year, would cover the whole earth to the depth of five feet; that is, if the earth were a level plain, it would spread over it an ocean of water five feet deep, reaching round the whole globe. The sky, therefore, has not only a river of water, but a whole ocean of it. And it has all come out of the sea. The sea, therefore, is the great inexhaustible fountain which is continually pouring up into the sky precisely as many streams, and as large, as all the rivers of the world are pouring into it. It is this which keeps the ocean at the same level from year to year. If it were not sending off into the air precisely as much as it receives from the rivers, it would be continually rising on its shores, and would finally overflow all the lands of the earth.

And now if the sea is the real birthplace of the clouds and the rivers, if out of it come all the rains and dews of heaven, then instead of being a waste and an incumbrance, it is a vast fountain of fruitfulness, and the nurse and mother of all the living. Out of its mighty breasts come the resources that feed and support all the population of

the world. All cities, nations, and continents of men, all cattle and creeping things and flying fowl, all the insect races that people the air with their million tribes innumerable, all grasses and grains that yield food for man and for beast, all flowers that brighten the earth with beauty, all trees of the field and forest that shade the plains with their lowly drooping, or that lift their banners of glory against the sky as they march over a thousand hills—all these wait upon the sea, that they may receive their meat in due season. That which it gives them, they gather. It opens its hands, and they are filled with food. If it hides its face, they are troubled, their breath is taken away, they die and return to their dust.

Omnipresent and everywhere alike is this need and blessing of the sea. It is felt as truly in the centre of the continent, where, it may be, the rude inhabitant never heard of the ocean, as it is on the circumference of the wave-beaten shore. He is surrounded, every moment, by the presence and bounty of the sea. It is the sea that looks out upon him from every violet in his garden-bed; from every spire of grass that drops upon his passing feet the beaded dew of the morning; from the rustling ranks of the growing corn; from the bending grain that fills the arms of the reaper; from the juicy globes of gold and crimson that burn amongst the green orchard foliage; from his bursting presses, and his barns that are filled with plenty; from the broad forehead of his cattle, and

the rosy faces of his children ; from the cool-drop-ping well at his door ; from the brook that murmurs by its side, and the elm and spreading maple that weave their protecting branches beneath the sun, and swing their breezy shadows over his habitation. It is the sea that feeds him. It is the sea that clothes him. It is the sea that cools him with the summer cloud, and that warms him with the blazing fires of winter. He eats the sea, he drinks the sea, he wears the sea, he plows and sows and reaps the sea, he buys and sells the sea, and makes wealth for himself and his children out of its rolling waters, though he lives a thousand leagues away from the shore, and has never looked on its crested beauty or listened to its eternal anthem.

Thus the sea is not a waste and an incumbrance. Though it bears no harvests on its bosom, it yet sustains all the harvests of the world. Though a desert itself, it makes all the other wildernesses of the earth to bud and blossom as the rose. Though its own waters are salt and wormwood, so that it cannot be tasted, it makes all the clouds of heaven to drop with sweetness, opens springs in the valleys and rivers among the hills, and fountains in all dry places, and gives drink to all the inhabitants of the earth.

2. A second use of the sea is to moderate the temperature of the world. A common method of warming houses in the winter is by the use of hot water. The water, being heated in the basement,

is carried by iron pipes to the remotest parts of the building, where, parting with its warmth, and becoming cooler and heavier, it flows back again to the boiler, to be heated anew, and so to pass round in the same circuit continuously. The advantage of this method is, that the heat can be carried to great distances, and in any direction, either laterally or vertically, so that apartments many hundred feet removed from the furnace, can be warmed as well as if they were close at hand.

Precisely such an office is performed by the sea in warming the distant regions of the earth. The furnace is in the tropics. The ocean is the boiler. The vertical rays of the sun pour into it a heat that is almost like fire itself. The temperature of the sea is raised to eighty-six degrees, and the water, swelling and rising in the same proportion, is compelled to seek its level by flowing off to the right and left of the equator. Flowing to the north, these waters are gathered into the Gulf Stream, which acts as a conducting pipe, three thousand miles in length, and sends them with a velocity swifter than that of the Mississippi river, and with a volume that is greater by a thousand fold, to spread out their treasured heat over the North Atlantic, where the winds take it up into their breath and blow it in gales of continual summer across the lands that border on the ocean. A similar current passes down the opposite side of the equator, and conveys towards the polar regions of the south a stream of heated water,

which is sometimes known to be sixteen hundred miles in breadth. The effect of these currents in raising the temperature of the cold climates is almost incredible. They make Great Britain and France as warm as they would otherwise be if they were fifteen or twenty degrees nearer the equator. It is computed that if the amount of heat thus spread out over the Atlantic by the single influence of the Gulf Stream in one winter's day, were concentrated upon the atmosphere of France and Great Britain, it would be sufficient to raise the temperature of these two countries from the freezing-point to the full heat of summer. It is also computed that the heat carried off every day from the Gulf of Mexico alone, by this agency, is "sufficient to raise mountains of iron from zero to the melting point, and to keep in flow from thence a molten stream of metal greater than the waters daily discharged by the Mississippi river." Thus a double purpose is served by these currents; for while they convey the needed warmth to the colder regions, they bear away from the tropics that superfluous heat which, if it were allowed to remain, would render the whole line of the equator intolerable and uninhabitable. And this is not the whole of the process of mitigation. For while the warm currents of the tropics are flowing towards the poles, the cold currents of the icy latitudes are moving towards the equator. Immense trains of icebergs are borne down by these streams towards the flaming furnaces of the line, and so the fervors

of the torrid zone are cooled and comforted by the frosty breath of the arctic and antarctic waters. Thus each region gives to the other what it has in excess, and receives from the other what it has in deficiency. The poles are warmed by the sun, which does not reach the poles, and the tropics are cooled by the ice which cannot be formed within the tropics. If it were not for the sea, the entire belt of the tropics would be a desert of perpetual fire, and the entire polar regions would be a desert of perpetual frost. One-third of the whole earth's surface would be unendurable with heat, another with cold, and only the remaining third would be fit for human habitation; whereas now, under these tempering influences of the ocean, the whole width of the world, with few exceptions, is given to man for his dwelling; and wherever he goes he finds a thousand forms of vegetable and animal life, which the same genial influence has made to wait upon him and be subservient to him. If we praise the ingenuity of man, who breaks the cold of winter by artificial heat, and that, too, by inventions which are themselves but a feeble and distant copy of what Nature has done before him on an infinitely grander scale, how should we admire the wisdom and goodness of Him who first *set* the great copy for man, and who makes the ocean itself an apparatus for storing up the heat of the vast tropical furnace, and sending thus all the softness and wealth of the garnered summer to the most distant quarters of the globe!

3. A third important use of the sea is to be a perpetual source of health to the world. Without it, there could be no drainage for the lands. The process of death and decay, which is continually going on in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, would soon make the whole surface of the earth one vast receptacle of corruption, whose stagnant mass would breathe a pestilence, sweeping away all the life of a continent. The winds would not purify it; for, having no place to deposit the burden, it would only accumulate in their hands, and filling their breath with its poisonous effluvia, it would make them swift ministers of death, carrying the sword of destruction into every part of the world at once. The only possible drainage of the world is by water. It is as necessary for the purpose of carrying away the feculence of decay and death, as it is for the purpose of bringing in and distributing to their place the positive materials of life. It is in this respect precisely what the blood is to the body. It not only brings what is necessary for growth and sustenance, but it takes away and discharges from the system every thing which has accomplished its office, and which, by remaining longer in its place, would be a source of disease and death.

Its first office is simply mechanical. The rains of heaven come fresh from the sea. Evaporation has emptied their hands of all previous burdens, so that their utmost powers of absorption may be ready for the new toil. Falling upon all the surface of

the world, and penetrating beneath as far as the process of putrefaction can reach, they dissolve all substances which decay has touched ; and while a portion of it is carried down to the roots of the trees, the grasses and the grains, there to be taken up and moulded into new forms of life, the remainder is washed into the brooks, by them carried to the rivers, and by these conveyed to the sea, whose caverns are vast enough to contain all the dregs of the continents, and whose various salts and chemical re-agents are abundantly sufficient to correct all their destructive powers, and prevent them from breathing up out of that watery sepulchre an atmosphere of poison and of plague.

Thus the sea is the scavenger of the world. Its agency is omnipresent. Its vigilance is omniscient. Where no sanitary committee could ever come, where no police could ever penetrate, its myriad eyes are searching, and its million hands are busy exploring all the lurking-places of decay, bearing swiftly off the dangerous sediments of life, and laying them a thousand miles away in the slimy bottom of the deep. And while all this is done with such silence and secrecy that it attracts no notice, yet the results in the aggregate are immense beyond conception. More than a thousand million tons of the sediment of the lands, mixed with this material of disease and death, is borne from either continent to the sea by the river-flow of a single summer. All the ships and railroads of the world, and all the men and animals of the world, work-

ing together upon this great sanitary toil, could not accomplish what is thus silently and easily accomplished by the sea.

And besides this mechanical process of drainage, by which the decay of the continents is continually washed from the lands and swept into the caverns of the deep, there is another important process by which the sea itself, in its own domain, is perpetually working for the health of the world. It is set to purify the atmosphere; and so the winds, whose wings are heavy and whose breath is sick with the malaria of the lands over which they have blown, are sent out to range over these mighty pastures of the deep, to plunge and play with its rolling billows, and dip their pinions over and over in its healing waters. There they rest when they are weary, cradled into sleep on the vast swinging couch of the ocean. There they rouse themselves when they are refreshed, and, lifting its waves upon their shoulders, they dash it into spray with their hands, and hurl it backwards and forwards through a thousand leagues of sky, until their whole substance being drenched, and bathed, and washed, and winnowed, and shifted through and through by this glorious baptism, they fill their mighty lungs once more with the sweet breath of ocean, and striking their wings for the shore, go breathing health and vigor along all the fainting hosts that wait for them in mountain and forest and valley and plain, till the whole drooping continent lifts up its rejoicing face and mingles its

laughter with the sea that has waked it from its fevered sleep and poured such tides of returning life through all its shrivelled arteries.

Thus, both by its mechanical and its chemical powers, is the sea set for the healing of the nations. It veins the earth with healthful blood and feeds its nostrils with the breath of life. It cleanses it from the corruption of its own decay, repairs the waste and weakness of its growing age, keeps its brow pure and sparkling as the sapphire sky, thrills its form with the pulse of eternal youth, and fires it with the flush of eternal beauty.

4. It may be mentioned, as a fourth office of the sea, that it is set to furnish the great natural pathways of the world. Perhaps one of the first impressions in looking upon the sea is, that it is a great barrier between the nations ; that it puts the continents much further asunder than they would otherwise be ; and that thus it acts as an unsocializing force, hindering the intercourse of the world. The truth lies in just the opposite direction. Instead of a barrier, the sea is a road across the barrier ; instead of putting the ends of the earth further apart, it brings them nearer together ; instead of being an unsocializing and an alienating force between them, it is the surest means of their acquaintance, and the most effectual bond of their fellowship.

Water is indeed a treacherous element, and will not, like the solid land, bear the foot of man or the hoof of beast ; and so, when they come to its bor-

ders in river, lake, or sea, both man and beast instinctively turn back as they would from a wall of rock or a circle of fire. The sea, therefore, is to that extent a barrier, that it lays instant restraint upon human travel in its primitive method and its freest detail. It does draw a decisive boundary around a nation, and keep its main population in on every side. But this is, in itself, a blessing. For boundaries are necessary to give individuality to nations, as they are to give individuality to men. There must be an outline to their personality ; and the firmer that outline is drawn, the greater vigor of character, and the deeper intensity of life they are likely to possess. The sea, therefore, first defines a nation to itself, fills it up with the refluxence and reaction of its own proper life ; and then, when it has reached a certain height and fulness, opens the door and lets it forth to find the life of other nations, and feel the brotherhood of the world. Hence, other things being equal, the strongest nations in civilized history have always been the insular or peninsular ones, like England, Italy, and Greece, which, using the sea in the beginning as a separation from other lands, and making it a boundary, a barrier, and a defence, have by it been able so to compress and compact their own energies that they have, at last, become strong enough to burst the ocean barrier that surrounded them, and then to employ the sea itself as an arm of power to reach and subsidize the ends of the earth. For while man cannot tread the sea

with his foot, he can travel it by his hand ; and when his hand becomes strong enough to lay the keel and spread the sail, and his art is cunning enough to poise the needle and map the stars of the sky, then the sea lays all its breadth beneath him, brings all the winds of heaven to his help, unlocks the gates of distant continents to his approach, and pours the riches of the globe at his feet.

Thus, as in so many other instances, that which was at first a hindrance, becomes at last a help and a blessing ; for the very presence of the barrier suggests, provokes, and compels that development of skill and power by which the barrier may be overcome ; and when it is overcome, then that which was at first a wall to bar all further progress, becomes a path of such breadth, and permanence, and ease of tread, as could not have been constructed by all the art and all the strength of man. Hence the ocean has been the great educator of the world. It has furnished the prime stimulus of national energy, and has determined, in the beginning and for all time, the paths in which all great history must run. The course of empire began on its shores, and has always kept within sight of its waters. No great nation has ever sprung up except on the sea-side, or by the banks of those great navigable rivers which are themselves but an extension of the sea. Had it not been for the Mediterranean, the history of Egypt, of Phenecia, of Greece and Rome and Carthage, would have been

impossible. Had it not been for the ocean itself, had the surface of the globe been one vast unbroken continent of land, the inhabitants on its opposite sides would have been practically as far apart as though they lived on different planets. All effective communication between remote parts of the world would have been impossible, for there would have been no highway between the nations. Only a system of railways, netting the world like the lines of latitude and longitude, could have made up for the want of the sea; and these could be furnished only as the latest and most wonderful result of that national development in wealth, power, and mechanical skill which is the fruit of a civilization that has already spanned the globe, and laid the resources of the world under contribution. Even with all the wealth, genius, and civilization which the world now contains, there is not a single railroad across either of the continents; but the broad path of the sea, that requires no building or repairing, has stretched between and around them ever since the creation of man. The railway is one of the last products of civilization and human skill, but a ship is one of the first; and so through all these thousands of years commerce has been moving on its way, first guiding its timid prow along the shores of the nations, then pushing its keel athwart the inland seas, and finally nailing its flag to the mast and laying its adventurous course right across the main ocean. Hence the sea has divided the lands only at last to bring them more closely

together. It has made the nations strangers for a time, only to bring them at length into a more intimate and helpful fellowship. The world has become acquainted with itself much more speedily and thoroughly than it could have done had it been all dry land ; and so the wide channels of the deep have been but the needful spaces on which the vital forces of all the lands might meet and mix in one, and from which, as from a central heart, they might send the pulse of their mingled life beating steadily around the globe.

And what is true of the whole world in this respect, is equally true of each separate division of the earth. How much more rapidly was our own land explored and settled ; how much more easily is it held and wielded by the civilized life that now occupies it, than would have been possible without the ocean border which girds it, and the gulfs and bays and lakes and mighty streams, which are themselves the children of the sea, and which carry the ocean paths for thousands of miles inland, even to the very base of the central mountains ! How long would it have taken for all the civilization of the world combined to open such roads of entrance into the depths of this continent, as are furnished by the great chain of lakes which the sea has thrown, like a necklace, around our northern border, and by that equally stupendous river which it has sent up to meet them from the Gulf of Mexico on the south ? By means of these great natural pathways, which God's hand had opened, the most

interior recesses of the country could be penetrated at once ; so that while the land was yet an unbroken wilderness, hundreds of years before plank roads and railways could have pushed the westward wave of civilization over the Alleghany hills, these great liquid roads which the sea had builded, were stretching their silver pavements for a thousand miles on every side, ready to convey the explorer or the emigrant from the ocean to the mountains, and from the mountains to the ocean, and to pour into the inmost heart of the continent the floating commerce of the world.

5. A fifth office of the sea is to furnish an inexhaustible storehouse of *power* for the world. The two greatest available powers known to man, are those of running water and steam ; and both these come out of the sea ; the former being the mere mechanical weight of the rivers falling from the uplands to the ocean, and returning to it the treasures which they have received from it through the sky, and the latter being the expansive force of water under the application of heat. And as these two are the greatest, so they are the most enduring powers ; they will last until the rains cease to fall from the clouds, until the forests are hewn from the mountains, and the treasures of coal are all dug from the depths of the earth.

Of the three great departments of labor which occupy the material industry of the race—agriculture, commerce, and manufactures—we have seen how the first two depend on the ocean, the one for

the rains which support all vegetable life, the other for the thousand paths on which its fleets are traveling. We now find that the third one also, though at first appearing to have no very intimate connection with the ocean, does, in fact, owe to it almost the whole of its efficiency. Ninety-nine hundredths of all the mechanical power now at work in the world is furnished by the water-wheel and the steam-engine. Ninety-nine hundredths, therefore, of all the manufacture of the world is wrought by the sea. The ocean is not that idle creature which it seems, with its vast and lazy length stretched between the continents, with its huge bulk sleeping along the shore, or tumbling in aimless fury from pole to pole. It is a giant, who leaves his oozy bed and comes up upon the land to spend his strength in the service of man. With power enough to carry off the gates of the continents, and to dash the pillars of the globe in pieces, he allows his captors to chain him in prisons of stone and iron, to bind his shoulders to the wheel, and set him to grind the food of the nations and weave the garments of the world. The mighty shaft which that wheel turns, runs out into all the lands ; and geared and belted to that center of power, ten thousand times ten thousand clanking engines roll their cylinders, and ply their hammers, and drive their million shuttles, till the solid planet shakes with the concussion, and the sky itself is deafened with the roar. It is the sea that keeps all your mills and factories in motion. It is the sea that

spins your thread and weaves your cloth. It is the sea that cuts your iron bars like wax, rolls them out into paper thinness, or piles them up in the solid shaft strong enough to be the pivot of a revolving planet. It is the sea that tunnels the mountain and bores the mine, and lifts the coal from its sunless depths and the ore from its rocky bed. It is the sea that lays the iron track, that builds the iron horse, that fills his nostrils with fiery breath, and sends his tireless hoofs thundering across the longitudes. It is the sea that fashions the leviathan ship, forges its thousand plates, drives its million bolts, pushes its reluctant bulk from the stocks, like a floating island broken from the mainland, and sends it from shore to shore, a nation on its decks, a continent in its sides, and the arms of ten thousand Titans heaving the vast machinery in its bosom. In short, it is the power of the sea which is doing for man all those mightiest works that would be else impossible. It is by this that he is to level the mountains, to tame the wilderness, to subdue the continents, to throw his pathways around the globe, and make his nearest approaches to omnipresence and omnipotence. If the ocean were to be dried up, the right arm of his power would be withered; the wheels of all progress would stop, and the wave of civilization would instantly roll back a whole century. No earthly force or combination of forces now known could supply a ten-thousandth part of the deficiency. Man's greatest strength lies in that weakest of all

known substances—water. The sinews of the world are laid in the sea, and the tides and billows of its ever restless surface are but the swell and play of those mighty muscles that could tear the continents from their roots and hurl the mountains from one pole to the other.

6. A sixth office of the sea is so be a vast storehouse of life. We have considered the ocean, hitherto, as ministering to the life that exists on the land, giving sustenance and strength to plants, animals, and men. But it does something more. The objects of its ministry do not thus lie, all of them, out of its own boundaries. The sea has a whole world of life in itself. It spreads its table first of all, for its own children, and these other gifts which it makes to the lands, royal and munificent as they are, are but the superfluities and remainders that are left from its table and wardrobe, after all its own inhabitants are housed and nourished, and clothed and fed. It is said that the life in the sea far exceeds all that exists out of it. There are more than twenty-five thousand distinct species of living beings that inhabit its waters. There are more than eight thousand species of fish, and some of these swarm in such innumerable millions, that often they “move in columns that are several leagues in width and many fathoms thick; and this vast stream of life continues to move past the same given point for whole months together. Incredible numbers of them are taken from the sea; in Norway four hundred millions of

a single species in a single season; in Sweden, seven hundred millions; and by other nations, numbers without number." But those that are taken bear only a small proportion to those that remain of the very same species, while the whole of these species themselves are but a fraction of the entire population of the larger marine life; and this entire population of larger life, again, is but a drop of the bucket compared to the various forms of microscopic and animalcular life with which immense tracts of the ocean are filled. These animalcules are some of them so small that it would take forty thousand of them to measure an inch in length, and so closely crowded together that a large drop of water contains five hundred millions; that is, half as many as there are human inhabitants on the whole globe.

It is not necessary to ask whether all this infinitude of life is meant for the use of man, or whether it has anything whatever to do in promoting his comfort or providing his food. It is certain that many of the larger forms of marine life are intended for his benefit, and are fitted for his use. Whole tribes of men derive almost their entire sustenance from the sea. The inhabitants of the polar regions draw their support more from this source than from all others combined. The same is true of the savage tribes on many of the islands of the Pacific, and along some of the shores of the continents. Even civilized lands levy immense contributions on the life of the sea. Many thousands

of vessels are employed in taking fish of various kinds from its waters, and uncounted millions of them are sent into every part of the world ; so that the sea is full of God's riches, if we consider it only as a vast storehouse of food for man.

But all the life of the sea does not need to be designed for man in order to explain its use. Life is its own use ; and wherever it exists, and in proportion as it exists, it is, in itself considered, the proof and illustration of the goodness of God. It is one of the noble uses of the sea, therefore, that it furnishes the dwelling-place for such an inconceivable immensity of life. It is even more full of God's goodness than it is of his power ; for while the latter requires larger masses for its exhibition, the former is best seen by examining the minutest portion. Nothing is more powerless than a single drop of water ; and yet, by placing this single drop under the microscope, we discover the character of vast masses of the ocean, and learn that in every one of these little globes of inhabited seawater there is literally a whole continent of happy beings that draw their existence from God, wait upon him for food, and receive their daily sustenance at his hand.

7. The last use of the sea which I shall mention, is what may be called the geological one. I mention it last, and as the culminating view, because it brings into sight the impressive element of time, and sends us back to that gigantic history of the past when the forces of the sea, which are

now in comparatively feeble play, were set to their Titanic task, and wrought out those stupendous results which belong to the very framework of Nature itself, and which will endure till the very substance of the globe is dissolved. God has appointed the sea to be the architect of the world. It has quarried the materials and brought them to their place, and then with its building tool and dressing hammer it has given them shape, and plied them, layer above layer, for the walls of the great house of life.

There is the clearest evidence that every part of the known earth has been, successfully and for unnumbered ages, under the dominion of the sea. When the cooling crust of the globe had become one unbroken sphere of granite rock, then the waters were let in upon it by Jehovah's hand to join with fire and frost and moving ice, and all the forces of the volcano and the earthquake, in tearing asunder this quarry of the continents—disintegrating, grinding, pulverizing and sifting, till the sands and limes and clays and various earths were separated from their rocky prison, assorted each after its kind, carried a thousand miles by mighty currents, spread out over the bottom of the deep, cemented firmly in their place by pressure, heat, and inward chemistry, piled story above story, till they were many thousands and many ten-thousands of feet in thickness; and so the great house of the world being built and finished and furnished beneath the sea, with endless stores of all things

needful,—coal, and iron, and marble, and copper, and gold,—it felt the uplifting hand of God, and rose into the sky, parting the ocean from pole to pole, a mighty continent, with mountain, and valley, and river and plain, soon green and golden, from side to side, with grass and grain, and forest and flower; a house not made with hands, high as the heavens, deep as the centre, wide as the firmament, bright as the light; a glorious habitation, waiting for the footstep, the eye, and the voice of its great coming master—man.

Having thus considered some of the material uses by which the sea proclaims the wisdom and goodness of its Maker, let us notice one or two of those qualities by which it more directly suggests his being, and brings nearer to us the sense of his presence and power.

“The sea is *his*,” says the Psalmist; and we may take the emphasis of that assertion as if it meant that in some sense he claims exclusive possession of the sea; that he gave the land to man, but in a manner reserved the ocean as his own domain. And it is so. Man’s dominion is the solid land. There he rears his habitations, hews down the forests, upturns the hills, fills the valleys, spreads his waving harvests, lays his roads of stone and iron like net-work across a whole continent, plans cities that last for thousands of years, changes the face of Nature herself so that she can never regain the lost expression, and when he dies builds monuments over his dust of such magnitude that

they might be seen from another planet, and of such endurance that they defy all the ravages of time, and live till the globe itself is consumed.

And this is the impression which is made upon the traveler, whether in the Old World or in the New: that the land is given to man; that it is possessed by man; and that wherever he goes, there is something which speaks to him *of* man. In the older continent, the vast cities, the unnumbered populations, the immeasurable culture, the mighty ruins, everything testifies of man; almost everything which the eye can see has felt his power, and shows upon itself the mark of his hand. Almost every particle of that ancient dust has been trodden by his foot, and been tributary to his life. And as the Old World speaks of man, and tells where he *has been*, so the New World speaks of him, and tells where he *shall be*. In the forests of the Mississippi, a thousand miles beyond the outmost cities, the sound of the axe and the gun declare that the all-conquering wave of civilization is coming; and a thousand miles further on, where even these prophetic sounds have not been heard, there is that which speaks of human approach. The stillness which is there is the stillness of fear, and not of security. It tells that man is coming. The very silence is full of his name. The trees whisper it to one another. The fox and the panther utter it in their cry. The winds take up the secret, and give it to the hills, and these to the echoing vales. The fountains

publish it to the brooks, and the brooks to the rivers, and the rivers spread it a thousand miles along their banks, and proclaim it at last to the northern seas—that man, the conqueror and king, is coming; that his footsteps has been heard on the Atlantic shore; that the hills await him; that the vales expect him; that the forests bend their tremulous tops to listen for him; that the fear of him is upon the beasts of the wood, the fowl of the mountain, the cattle of a thousand hills; upon all rivers and plains, upon all quarries of rock and mines of precious ore; for all that is within the compass of the land is given to his dominion, and he shall subdue its strength and appropriate its treasure, and scatter the refuse of it as the dust beneath his feet.

But there man's empire stops. God has given the land to man, but the sea he has reserved to himself: "the sea is *his*, and he made it." He has given man "no inheritance in it; no, not so much as to set his foot on." If he enters its domain, he enters it as a pilgrim and a stranger. He may pass over it, but he can have no abiding place upon it. He cannot build his house, nor so much as put up his tent within it. He cannot mark it with his lines, nor subdue it to his uses, nor rear his monuments upon it. If he has done any brilliant exploit upon its surface, he cannot perpetuate the memory of it by erecting so much as an arch or a pillar. It steadfastly refuses to own him as its lord and master. It is not

afraid of him, as is the land. Its depths do not tremble at his coming. Its waters do not flee when he appeareth. When it hears of him, then it laughs him to scorn. All the strength of all his generations is to it as a feather before the whirlwind, and all the noise of his commerce and all the thunder of his navies it can hush in a moment within the silence of its impenetrable abysses. Whole armies have gone down into that unfathomable darkness, and not a floating bubble marks the place of their disappearing. If all the populations of the world, from the beginning of time, were cast into its depths, the smooth service of its oblivion would close over them in an hour; and if all the cities of the earth, and all the structures and monuments that were ever reared by man, were heaped together over that grave for a tombstone, it could not break the surface of the deep, and lift back their memory to the light of the sun and the breath of the upper air; the sea would still clap his hands in triumph over them, and roll the billows of his derision a thousand fathoms above the topmost stone of that mighty sepulchre. The patient earth submits to the rule of man, and the mountains bow their rocky heads before the hammer of his power and the blast of his terrible enginery. But the sea cares not for him; not so much as a single hair's breadth can its level be lowered or lifted by all the art, and all the effort, and all the enginery of all the generations of time. The land tells of man because his foot prints are there, and his marks and monuments

are on every side. But the sea does not tell of him, for he can build no monuments upon its domain. Though he travel a thousand years upon the same path, he leaves upon it no foot-print to tell where he has been. Nor can he, with all his skill, fix upon it any mark of ownership. It steadfastly refuses to receive any impression or keep any memorial of him. He comes and goes upon it, and a moment after, it is as if he had never been there. He may engrave his titles upon the mountain top, and quarry his signature into the foundations of the globe ; but he cannot write his name on the sea.

And with this is connected that other feature of the sea which marks its reservation to God : I mean its *loneliness*. One who has never travelled upon it expects to find it somewhat thickly populated. He thinks of the vast traffic and travel that goes over the waters, and he is ready to imagine that the great deep is alive with this hurrying to and fro of the nations. He reads of the lands "whose commerce whitens every sea," and he is ready to think that the ocean itself is as full of sails as the harbor of some mighty metropolis. But he finds his mistake. As he leaves the land the ships begin to disappear. As he goes on his way they soon all vanish, and there is nothing about him but the round sea and the bended sky. Sometimes he may meet or overtake a solitary ship during the day ; but then, again, there will be many days when not a single sail will cross the horizon. The captain

of the Adriatic told us that he had repeatedly made voyages across the Atlantic and not seen a single ship between soundings. We asked him if it was on the ordinary line of travel. He replied it was on the great highway of commerce between the two hemispheres. When we reflect that all the travelling that is done upon the seas is confined to a very few paths, and that those paths cover but an infinitesimal part of the whole surface of the ocean, this loneliness of the sea becomes astonishing and overwhelming. There are spaces measured by thousands and thousands of miles, over which no ship has ever passed. The idea of a nation's commerce whitening every sea, is the wildest fancy. If all the ships that have ever been built were brought together into a single fleet, they would fill but a handbreadth of the ocean. The space, therefore, that man and his works occupy on the sea, is as small in extent as the hold he has on it by his power is slight and superficial. Both together are as nothing. Both together must always be as nothing. The ocean covers three-fourths of the surface of the globe, and by far the greatest part of this vast expanse is and ever has been entirely free from his presence and visitation.

And it is this vastness, this loneliness, and this impossibility of subjugation by man, that set it apart from the secular aspect that belongs to the rest of the world, and consecrate it as the peculiar possession and dwelling-place of the Most High. Like some vast builded temple, it perpetually

speaks of him and for him. It bodies forth his immensity. It represents eternity. Girded round all the lands, as death is girded around all life, it seems to bring the unseen world to our vision, and to sound and shine with the glory and the awfulness of that state which is beyond the grave. Travelling out into its vastness, we seem to be moving beyond the boundaries of space and time. Sailing on, day after day, without any apparent progress, never reaching the horizon that is before, never leaving the horizon that is behind, it is as if we had lost all connection with the earth which we inhabit, and were voyaging upon the infinite expanse of the skies, travelling to some world that lies beyond the stars of heaven. The strangeness of this sensation becomes perplexing and oppressive. It is almost as if we had quitted life itself, and the wings of eternity had taken our sails and were blowing us over the sea of death towards the throne of God and the bar of the judgment. A feeling of the supernatural begins to steal upon us. Familiar sights and sounds take on a weird and mystical significance. We look at one another, and in our reverie wonder if we are not already disembodied spirits. We look at the ship, and wonder if some unseen hands are not grasping its keel, holding it to its course, and lifting it from billow to billow. We look at the engines, and wonder if they are not a kind of archangels of the deep, prisoned to their task, and bowing to one another with some secret intelligence as they lay

their mighty shoulders to the wheels and push the trembling vessel along its path. We look at the sun, and it seems to shake its beams upon us with a new and strange significance. We look at the stars by night, and they seem to be nearer to us, and to be gazing upon us with longing eyes, and with a more fixed and solemn earnestness. We look at the track of the ship, and it is a wake of sparkling fires, as if our bark had left at length the seas of earth behind it, and were sailing over the ocean of the firmament. We have forgotten time ; we are thinking of eternity. We have forgotten man ; we are thinking of God. The bondage of the senses is dissolved, and the things that are beyond them come breaking into our being. The earth which we have left behind us seems as far away as if it were another planet, and the themes that used to lie beyond the planets find easy entrance to our thoughts, and rule us with a strange and sudden dominion. The petty interests that engrossed us a while ago are shrunk to nothingness. The eagerness of anticipation, the excitement of departure are all forgotten, as the departed soul forgets the pain, the restlessness, and the fear of the dying-bed, when the shores of a receding world fade out of its sight, and the strange calm of that vast new ocean of life over which it is sailing, takes possession of its consciousness. We are alone with God. We are walking in his temple, and it would scarcely surprise us if we should see him riding upon the clouds, or descending upon

the deep, and moving towards us in his chariot of the waters.-

In speaking thus of God's presence on the sea, I do not mean to imply that he is not also on the land, or that the earth does not contain abundant indications of his presence. I only speak of those things which mark the ocean as in some respects the place of his peculiar dwelling and the sphere of his special manifestation. We know that the earth is full of his works; that his footprints are upon every plain and mountain, the mark of his fingers on all its fields and forests and streams. Yet we cannot help saying and feeling that his dwelling-place is in the heavens, because of its vastness, its omnipresence, and its separation from man. We involuntarily look up to the sky when we refer to him. We point thither when we would indicate his residence; as if, though the earth is his footstool, and the place where his works are wrought, still the heavens were his habitation, and there he had his throne and peculiar dwelling. So, in lesser measure, is it with the sea. Its vastness, its omnipresence, and its separation from the presence and power of man, set it apart as the symbol of God, the temple of his abode, and the place of his special manifestation. It is to the land which it embosoms what the sky is to the whole globe which it encircles: it is a sky beneath the sky, touching the earth with a more solid grasp than that, and surrounding it with a more palpable firmament. And as the sky would have a vaster

mystery if we could sail over it as we sail upon the sea, so the sea *has* a vaster mystery because we can sail over it and find it a more palpable sky, only with its arch inverted and its firmament under our feet. The sky is distant, but the sea is near. We can walk down to the shore and lay our hand upon its waters ; and when we do so, we feel as if we touched the feet of Jehovah ; as if we saw the very fields of immensity and eternity, and held within our grasp the lines that bound us to another life. And it is this which gives the sea its mystery and might, that it is fraught with these divine elements ; that it is charged with these spiritual suggestions ; that it is the symbol of eternity and infinity, and crowds upon us, with irresistible majesty, the vision of that life unseen, and those worlds unknown, for which our souls are made, and to which the feet of every one of us are swiftly and irreversibly travelling. There is a sea within us which responds to the sea without. Deep calleth unto deep, and it is the answer and the yearning of these inward waves, in reply to that outward call, which makes our hearts to swell, our eyes to grow dim with tears, and our whole being to lift and vibrate with such strong emotion when we stand upon the shore and look out upon the deep, or sit in the stern of some noble ship and feel ourselves cradled on the pulsations of its mighty bosom. There is a life within us which calls to that sea without—a conscious destiny which only *its* magnitude and *its* motion can symbolize and

utter. There is that in man which draws him to the sea by some secret spell, whose attraction he cannot resist or master. There is a deep, eternal brotherhood between him and the rolling ocean. Though it scorns his power, and will not take his chain nor bear his handwriting, nor even his very presence except as a pilgrim and stranger, it still links itself to him by ties that are stronger than steel, and that draw him towards it from cities and forests, from the tops of mountains and the depths of midland deserts. Though he have never looked upon it, and dwells thousands of miles away from it, still it is a reality, a presence, and a power unto him. He thinks of it by day ; he dreams of it by night. In his imagination he fashions its shores, pours its mighty tides around the land, stretches its azure expanse like the sky, pushes his bark upon its waves, loosens the winds upon its sounding billows, and sweeps out from the fading headlands to lose himself in the dread immensity, and find himself alone with the sea and its Maker.

Hence, in a season of calm weather,
 Though inland far we be,
 Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
 Which brought us hither ;
 Can in a moment travel thither,
 And see the children sport upon the shore,
 And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

And as the sea, which thus speaks to man, repels and draws him, stirring his inmost being with the urgency of these mighty contradictions, so it is with that God whom the sea declares, whose pavil-

lion is upon its floods, whose chariot rides upon its waves, and the beams of whose chambers are laid upon its waters. Between him and fallen man there is a repulsion and an attraction which rests on a far deeper basis, and stirs the soul with the sense of a far profounder contradiction. Needing him and yet fearing him, drawn by his infinite goodness and driven back again by his infinite holiness, man alternately flies toward him, and flees from him; until, these conflicting forces that play between the creature and the Creator being reconciled at the cross of Christ, they flow together, sea to sea and soul to soul, and the joy of their union is like the gladness of the waters when the ocean receives to its bosom the streams of the world, and the noise of their jubilee rolls round the globe.

And so, by its material uses and its spiritual voices, does the sea ever speak to us to tell us that its builder and maker is God. He hewed its channels in the deep, and drew its barriers upon the sand, and cast its belted waters around the world. He fitted it to the earth and the sky, and poised them skilfully the one against the other, when he "measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance." He gave the sea its wonderful laws, and armed it with its wonderful powers, and set it upon its wonderful work.

O'er all its breadth his wisdom walks,
On all his waves his goodness shines.

Let us give thanks, therefore, for the sea. Let us remember him that gave it such vast dominion, and made it to be not only the dwelling-place of his awful presence, but the beautiful garment of his love and the mighty instrument of his goodness. Let it speak to us of his unfathomable fulness. Let it teach us that he has made nothing in vain. Let it remind us that the powers of destruction and death are under his control, and that behind the cloud of darkness and terror that often invests them, they are working out immeasurable results of blessing and life for the future time, for distant regions, and for coming generations. Let it lead us to confide in him who "ruleth the raging of the seas, who stilleth the noise of their waves and the tumult of the people;" who has all the forces of the world at his control, and all the ages of time at his command; who knows how to build his kingdom beneath the sea of human opposition, as he built the continents beneath the ocean waters; who makes all the powers of dislocation and decay yield to that kingdom some element of strength or richness; and who, when the appointed hour shall come, will lift it irresistibly above the waves, and set its finished beauty beneath the heavens, with the spoils of all time gathered upon its walls, and the nations of the saved walking in its glory.



SERMON

PREACHED AT THE OPENING

OF THE

GENERAL CONVENTION

OF THE

Protestant Episcopal Church,

IN

PHILADELPHIA,

September 5, 1838.

BY THE RIGHT REV. WILLIAM MEADE, D. D.

ASSISTANT BISHOP OF VIRGINIA.

PHILADELPHIA:
Episcopal Recorder Press.

WILLIAM STAVELY, PRINTER.

1838.

SERMON.

THUS SAITH THE LORD, STAND YE IN THE WAYS, AND SEE, AND ASK FOR THE OLD PATHS, WHERE IS THE GOOD WAY, AND WALK THEREIN, AND YE SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.—Jer. vi. 16.

METHINKS I hear some one say, could the preacher of this day find no other, save this old and hackneyed text, this text so often and confidently quoted by the bigot, who sees his own church and tenets in almost every line of holy writ and every practice of primitive times? Could he come before us with no other words but these, so for ever in the mouth of the old man who loves to upbraid the present generation, and to boast of the glory of former days?

And because our text may have been often used and sometimes abused, is there no virtue left in it; must it be laid aside for ever? God forbid! We know that there is a spirit of complaining in man which often misapplies the text, that the old man fondly referring to the days of his youth will sigh for their return as though they were the days of Eden's purity and bliss. The preacher has often heard such language from the lips of the aged concerning a period and condition of the church in his native state, over whose disgrace it became the pious rather to mourn and weep. Often has he been tempted to reply unto such in the words of the wise man, "Say not thou what is the cause that the former times were better than these, for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this thing."

Old ways are not necessarily good ways. Many old things ought to pass away for ever and be forgotten, or only remembered with grief and shame. All other things being equal, however, old things should be preferred to the new. Although old age standeth not in length of years, wisdom being the grey hair to man, and an unspotted life old age; yet when wisdom, an unspotted life and grey hairs are found together, how lovely and venerable the sight. So with old paths when worn by the footsteps of saints

and leading to heaven, how holy and blessed are they! How sweet the rest to which they lead! Such were the old paths mentioned in the text, and which cannot be too often pointed out to successive generations of travellers to eternity. Think not then of my text as the oft-used saying of some bigot to his sect, or of some querulous old man; but remember its first words. What are they? Thus saith the Lord. What doth the Lord say? Stand ye in the ways, that is, the many doubtful ways of blind bewildered man, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and ye shall find rest for your souls. It is God, not man, that speaks; and so long as individuals, churches and nations are prone to forsake the paths in which the Lord once led them, so long is there use for the text. Whenever they do depart from the same, wandering into strange paths, it is the duty of God's ministers to bid them inquire for the old paths and walk therein; or even when there may be no special cause for rebuke it is good to stir up pure minds by way of remembrance of the old paths.

Let us inquire then into the true meaning of our text, for we do not wish to make it suit the purposes of a party, or bend and accommodate it to some favourite but less important and perhaps disputed peculiarities of a church. Perhaps one might say, what are these old paths but the statutes and ordinances of the Lord which are on record? What have we to do but go to the law and testimony? "The Bible, the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants," and of that must we inquire for the old paths.

Our text unquestionably pays the first and highest honour to that holy volume; but if I mistake not, it also refers to the doctrines and precepts of the same as understood and practised by those in whom the Spirit of the Lord was, and whose ways are held up to the imitation of successive generations. We all know that while the tongue may persuade, it is the life which commands; and therefore God has graciously given us bright examples of holiness to illumine and smooth our path to heaven. Is there not something most cheering and strengthening to the heart in the thought and assurance, that the wise and pious have understood and practised the religion of the

Bible in the very same way in the best ages and purest states of the church of God, so that we have not only the Bible in its letter, but the plainest and most practical exhibitions of its spirit in the lives of the righteous, that we have some fixed standards for our faith, and worship, and conduct. In this present age, especially, there is much comfort to the mind of the preacher in the thought, that there are some old and sure paths towards heaven in which we may walk with certainty, and that we have not to strike out into any new, untried, and as some think, nearer ones. 'This is an age of discovery, of great enterprise, and of some high improvements. No bounds are set to the efforts and expectations of man whose motto is, "attempt great things, expect great things." There is something in the human mind which still says, "we shall be as gods;" we can and we will scale the heavens; we can and will draw near to the distant planets, by signs at least we may hold converse with their inhabitants; we will think it no robbery to seize upon some of the attributes of Deity, and by the exercise of our sovereign will invest the sleeper with more than an archangel's wing and vision; and what shall be kept from us, seeing that we soar already far above proud Babel's highest pinnacle. I remember that three years since, at the close of our last General Convention, a communication appeared in our public papers announcing with all the forms of sincerity and truth, that a celebrated astronomer of the old world had by means of an instrument of mighty power made a near approach to the moon; that he had clearly seen not merely mountains, seas and lakes, but temples and private houses, the worshippers and the inhabitants, clearly discerning their different pursuits. That such a thing should be written in this age of fraud and fiction is not surprising, but that it should be received so readily as it was by great numbers was indeed to be regretted, and is only to be accounted for by the fact that there is a general, and deep, and unwarranted impression upon many minds of an almost unlimited expansion of the powers of man, and advancement in the knowledge of things hitherto unknown. That very great improvements and discoveries in the arts and sciences have been made, and may yet be made, we admit and are pleased to admit. We hear-

tily rejoice in them as sure proofs of the high susceptibilities of our nature, and because they strengthen our faith in those wonderful things yet to come in a future state, which eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, and the heart never conceived. Even though some of these speculations and anticipations be carried to an extravagant height still they are comparatively harmless. We may not merely disregard the winds and waves, and taking a direct course over the wide Atlantic, by the mighty power of steam reach the shores of England in a few short days and nights, but we may delight ourselves before-hand in the thought (so confidently encouraged by a philosopher of the day) that ere long missionaries and bibles in ample abundance will ascend the regions of air, and on the swift wings of the wind, in safe ærial arks, sail over Christian lands and alight, as so many angels from heaven, amongst the inhabitants of Thibet and Tartary, China and Hindostan. These, and such as these, we can and do read and hear, and smile at the same, and wish the prophets, "in their fine frenzy rolling," more than the fulfilment of all their ærial visions. But there is something, Christian brethren, which we cannot and will not, because we ought not, thus read and hear, smiling at the same. When we read and hear, as sometimes we are forced to do, that as in arts and sciences, so also in our blessed religion—the whole hope of our immortal souls for ever—discoveries are yet to be made, of which the wisest and best in the kingdom of God have been utterly ignorant; that the true sense of scripture has been but little elicited; that the Bible is comparatively a sealed book, or our eyes yet unopened, I confess my heart sinks within me, and I ask, Is this the highway to heaven, once so plain that wayfaring men, though fools, need not err therein? Is this that blessed Gospel which was preached to the poor, and concealed, as it were, from the wise and prudent, because in the pride of their hearts they despised a thing so simple, so suited to babes? I grant that the revelation of Divine truth has been by gradual developments in successive dispensations, rising like the sun and shining more and more unto the perfect day. But did not the darkness pass away and the true light come in him who brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel? Are

not Christians the children of the light and the day? Where is the intimation of some new dispensation of more glorious light on this side of heaven?

Brethren, this is not a subject for bold or curious speculation. Let men cultivate the arts and sciences to the utmost—let them, if they please, attempt ærial flights—let them make all manner of experiments, and imagine all manner of theories on every subject under heaven—save one—but when they approach that, let them take their shoes from off their feet, for the ground is holy. Where God hath spoken let not man dream or speculate, but rather humbly hear the plain words of heaven, nor imagine that far more is meant than has been said. Let not the humble, sincere, and even the intelligent reader of scripture, be now told that he has scarce learned any thing as he ought to have learned. Almost as well go back some hundred years and give our faith and hope into the keeping of a few clerks and priests, and leave unread a book which though for thousands of years the object of anxious study, is yet, it seems, unknown—its mere letter and surface seen by the eye.

Brethren, my soul rejoices in the thought that it is not thus with us, but that when we enter upon a subject so deeply interesting to man as that of religion, we can look back and see the same old paths in which our fathers walked with God and found rest for their souls. O! there is comfort and security to the soul in knowing that to us, as to our fathers, is there the very same church of the living God—the same old road to heaven, though enlarged and beautified and trodden by the feet of increasing millions of the saints and pilgrims of the Lord. It is a true article of our faith “that the Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testament, everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only mediator between God and man, being both God and man.”

To our text then let us turn, endeavouring to find out and apply its true meaning; not seeking by force to adapt it to some favourite opinions of our own, or peculiar practices of the church of our choice, but to use it as God would have us, seeking the mind of the Lord, asking for the old paths in which

the Lord led his people and in which his people loved to walk and be perfect before him.

And can there be any doubt or difficulty in this? What were these old paths but those in which Adam, ere he fell, and righteous Abel, and holy Enoch, and the sons of God with faithful Noah, walked, and were perfect in their generations? What were they but the same in which Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph continued to walk, while others were departing from the Lord and corrupting their way upon earth? What were they but those in which Moses, the man of God, and Joshua and Samuel and David and the Prophets walked, according to the commandments of the Lord? God has never at any time left himself without some faithful witnesses whom he reserved to illustrate by their holy lives the nature of true piety, and to be held up to successive generations as examples worthy of imitation. Some precious seasons of grace, some sweet times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord has he always granted to his church, which to the true hearted in the midst of their sorrowings have been like the green spots to the suffering eye of the traveller on the sun-burnt sandy plains of Africa's wide deserts. Such were, doubtless, the days of Enoch and the sons of God, when they called upon the name of the Lord, before they married with the fair but ungodly daughters of men. Such were the days of the Patriarchs after the waters of the deluge had purified the earth, until in their madness men began again to bid defiance unto heaven. Such were the days of Joshua and of those who outlived Joshua, who remembered the mighty works of the Lord. How good, under the guidance of the text, to look back to the faith and patience and zeal of those interesting times, and call upon our souls to follow the footsteps of these saints of the Lord. Though the light which shone upon their path was dim, yet it was light from heaven—the dawn of our own perfect day—faint rays from the same sun of righteousness which now pours its bright mid-day beams upon us. By that light they walked uprightly and “obtained a good report,” doing worthy deeds “by which, though dead, they yet speak to us.” They lived as “pilgrims and sojourners upon earth,” going out readily in a spirit of faith at the com-

mand of God, not knowing whither. One thing was certain; they were always looking for a better—that is, an heavenly country—a city that had foundations, whose maker and builder was God; and God was not ashamed to be called their God. One hesitated not to offer up his own, his only son, at God's command. Another, not caring to be called the son of Pharoah's daughter, chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; having respect to the recompense of reward, he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. I mention only these few faithful witnesses who walked in the old paths. According to the Apostle, there was a great cloud of them; numerous were they as the drops of water in a great cloud, and by them did he urge Christians to run with patience the race that was set before them. But are there no other bright examples of godliness, walking in old paths and finding rest in the good way? Were it sinning against the truth of the text and departing from the allowed use of scripture to apply the same to men who have lived and things done since the days of the prophet Jeremiah? Did not our Lord and the Apostles often use passages of the Old Testament by way of illustration in a sense and for a purpose not originally designed, so that it is not always very easy to perceive when they are used in a spirit of accommodation, and when as the fulfilment of actual prophecy? May we not, therefore, say of some other blessed periods of the church, and some other holy ways thereof, "Inquire ye for the old paths and find the good way?" Has no new light been shed from heaven since the days of the prophet; no new witnesses to the truth been raised up; no more glorious things been done for the church of God? Speaking of the days of Jesus Christ, and comparing them with the dark and terrific ones of the former dispensation, the Apostle says, "For ye are not come unto the mount which might be touched; that burned with fire; nor unto blackness and darkness and tempest; but unto Mount Zion; the heavenly Jerusalem; to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly of the church of the first-born which are written in heaven; to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling,

which speaketh better things than that of Abel." Was there, indeed, such a time to the church of God, when the Lord visited it and did glorious things for it; when old things passed away and all things became new? Did the children of God walk as the children of marvellous light and the sons of a glorious liberty? Was the standard of holiness raised aloft and such things done as had never before been seen? Was the church of God then a praise to him upon earth and a pattern to be followed in after ages? Then surely a minister of God, speaking on such an occasion as this, might, even from the words of this ancient text, say, Inquire ye for the old paths of Christ and his Apostles, and the holy fathers, and walk in the same, and ye shall find rest. Yea, more; if at any time the church should have lost her first love; if Satan should have prevailed; but if God should have put the spirit of his Apostles into some valiant reformers who should again revive true piety in the church; neither would we hesitate to say to their successors, if declining in zeal, inquire ye for the old paths of those holy and valiant spirits who laid down their lives in the defence of the faith once delivered to the saints.

Permit me then, brethren and friends, assembled together in General Convention, after these reasons for choosing the text, and these explanations of the same, to detain you for a short time, while I refer to some of these old paths of the church of God.

In the first place, rejoicing with you whenever by the grace of God we have kept to these paths.

In the second place, exhorting to a return to those from which we may have in any measure departed.

And, in the third place, warning against certain dangers and temptations to which we are exposed at this time and which might lead us far away from these old paths.

I. To show that we are not disposed to follow those who think that the former days are always, and in all things, better than our own, we will delight to trace a very remarkable and pleasing resemblance between the church in which we minister at this day and the primitive church, in some important and interesting particulars which identify them together and make us feel that we are a part of that

church which was built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone. It is well known to the Christian world that it was the declared and most anxious desire and study of the reformers of our church and the framers of our liturgy, to select from the canons, creeds and liturgies of the primitive church, all those things relating to faith, discipline and worship, which were most conformable to the word of God. Next to the scriptures these, though fallible, were the standards to which they referred.* They delighted to retain as much as possible of the language, order of service, and forms of the primitive church.†

* In a work written by Timothy Puller, D. D., on the moderation of the Church of England, we have the following confirmation of the above remark. "Concerning the testimony of the Fathers, the Church of England hath observed the same wise moderation in her judgment and use of them also; no where judging of them as unliable to error, according to the arguing of the 21st article. Because they are but men, and sometimes have erred in things pertaining to God; neither hath our church any where swallowed their errors, through the veneration of their piety and antiquity. Yet, because of their proximity to the apostolic times and the just authority in the church, which for their learning and piety they have obtained, and all along hath been given them, our church in her monuments gives a great deference to their judgment, testimony and practice. Thus in the 31st canon it is written, "Forasmuch as the ancient fathers of the church, led by the example of the apostles, appointed, etc.—we, following their holy and religious example, do constitute and decree—and again, canon 32, according to the judgment of the ancient fathers and the practice of the primitive church, we do ordain. And again, in canon 60—forasmuch as it hath been a solemn, ancient, and laudable custom in the church of God, continued from the apostles times, that, etc.—we therefore will and appoint, etc. In king Edward the Sixth's proclamation, before the Common Prayer Book, the reason for our forms and rites is justified from the practice of the primitive church, and in the preface concerning the service of the church. Here you have an order for prayer and reading the holy scripture much agreeable to the mind and purpose of the old fathers. And in many other places where they are named, and where they are not named, the footsteps of their ancient piety have very discernible impressions throughout the whole constitution of the church. Wherefore, he says, "Let such authority and reverence be continued to the ancient and orthodox fathers, as may be subject to the determination, truth and authority of the holy scriptures. For always the ancient fathers themselves refused any other kind of honour or respect, frequently admonishing the reader, that he admits their opinions or interpretation but as far as he sees them agree with the holy writings."

† Neither is there any impropriety in the language of our worship, only as language, which is the clothing of our thoughts, must of course wear old, as doth a garment, so, as a garment, some words and phrases of ancient usage have been changed into terms suitable to the language of the present time. Now this is no proof of impropriety in the sense, which is not itself changed, but only clothed anew. However, this alteration hath and must always happen even to the word of God, the holy Bible, which, through the variations of language is forced, age after age, to get into new translations, as into new

They wisely judged it to be a safe course to copy from those holy, resolute, devoted, heavenly-minded men, who lived nearest to the times of our Lord and his Apostles, who laboured in the same field on which they toiled, carried on the same work which they begun, and heard from the lips of the disciples those things which our Lord spake concerning his kingdom, during the last forty days and nights which he spent upon earth. No wonder, then, that there should be so remarkable a coincidence in many things of worship, doctrine, and discipline, and that our church should be endeared to the hearts of all who are able to trace the similitude by its numerous expressions, petitions, forms and usages which have come down to us almost unchanged from such high and holy antiquity.

Where shall I begin with my congratulations on this subject? Shall I speak of the resemblance in all important points between our church polity and that of primitive and apostolic times? What need is there, seeing that so many public sermons make mention of it—that so many tracts and volumes trace it out, and that there is but one sentiment among us on the subject? Who but reads in scripture and other books, of the “divers orders of ministers” in God’s ancient church? Who does not meet with the same in the Christian church, established by our Lord and the Apostles, transmitted to the fathers, and continued in unbroken succession to the present day? In this old path our church has always trodden and found rest therein.

Shall I speak of our unity in faith and doctrine with the primitive church? How can we differ, seeing that we use the same creeds which formed an important part of their regular

raiment, to preserve itself from the derision, from the cruel mockings of the scorner. For the same reason and by the same steps as the Bible, our liturgy hath reformed its language, “for the more perfect rendering (as the church alleges) not only such portions of holy scripture as are inserted into it, but also such other passages, which, through the decays of time became obsolete, or of doubtful signification,” and so liable to scorn and misconstruction. Not but the old language is well retained at the altar, being venerable for its age, as those who wait at it are for their grey hairs: ancient language and ancient men, if they offend not through decay, give a reverence and dignity to that solemn work.—*Bisse’s Beauty of Holiness in the Book of Common Prayer*, p. 16.

service. How many millions of God's saints have, in the very same words, solemnly uttered their belief in all the great articles of the Christian faith from the early ages of the church. What a communion must thus be produced in the minds of men on these important subjects. In how many other parts of our own and the primitive liturgies are the great distinguishing doctrines of the Christian faith set forth. Witness that of the holy, undivided and glorious Trinity. How carefully has the church guarded it, in every age, against the gates of hell. Who can tear it from our own or any primitive liturgy without scattering them all in ten thousand fragments to the winds? * In every repetition of the doxology, after psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, we renew a declaration of our faith in the adorable Trinity, confirming and strengthening the same. Who can unite in the *Te Deum*, the *Gloria Patri*, *Gloria in Excelsis*, our Liturgy, Communion, and other services, without believing in the Three Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit? Whence came all the doxologies and ascriptions of praise and prayers? Without an exception, from the liturgies of ancient times, which copied them, if not always in the very words yet in the substance, from the Holy Scriptures.† When we examine into some of these venerable relics which have come down to us from ancient times, and

* Now what is this doxology to the eternal Trinity thus enlarged and perfected, but that of the church in heaven, which worships before the throne, crying "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." And as they above repeat it continually, it can be no blame in us to do it frequently. And truly this form of sound and excellent words being so often rehearsed in our service, and that alternately by the minister and people, and thus mutually exciting and confirming each other's faith, it must be their best guard against the attempts of some moderns, whereof one is so wild as to revive that very corruption of Arius, saying "Glory be to the Father, by the Son, in the Holy Ghost."—*Bisse's Beauty of Holiness in the Book of Common Prayer*.

† The *Gloria in Excelsis* was also called the Angelical hymn, from beginning with the words of the song of the angels, "Glory be to God on High." This was chiefly used in the communion service.

The *Trisagion*, or *Cherubical hymn*, was originally in these words—"Holy! holy! holy! Lord God of Hosts; heaven and earth are full of thy glory; who art blessed for ever. Amen." This was formerly used in the middle of the communion service.

The *Hallelujah* was generally sung upon Easter-day, and was used by all the people. Augustine terms it the Christian's sweet call, whereby they invited one another to sing praises unto Christ.

meet with so many well-known and hallowed ejaculations and supplications, we almost feel as if we were engaged in our own beloved liturgy.

I would especially notice one thing common to our own and the ancient liturgies. Our prayers are many though forming one service, being broken into short expressive collects, and always conclude with the name of the blessed Saviour. Just so was it in the primitive liturgies. One only plea was put up, and that plea was mercy through Christ. Through thy Christ, for thy Christ's sake, were the last words of every prayer, except such as were offered up immediately to the Son himself, as in the prayer of St. Chrysostom, the last of our service, which was addressed to the Son himself.* This is a most blessed feature in our service and was in theirs. It was a strict compliance with the Saviour's direction that we should ask for every thing in his name.† The church seems fearful to utter many words in prayer, to put up more than one or two petitions without stopping and mentioning the name of God's dear Son, and entreating his intercession. What an effectual method of impressing this great doctrine on the heart.

Having said thus much as to our agreement in doctrine and the mode of setting it forth, let me briefly allude to a close resemblance even in gestures and forms. Are we sometimes

* However clearly soever the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ is set forth in our articles and homilies, yet is it much more effectually done by interweaving of it in all our prayers and offices, making it the Alpha and Omega of the Prayer-book as it is of the Bible. Well did Luther call this blessed doctrine "*Articalus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ.*" No church can enjoy the blessing of Heaven except this great cardinal truth be clearly, emphatically, continually, and most earnestly preached. The Prayer-book does its part, let the ministry do theirs. It is said that a certain builder being engaged to construct a large and splendid temple, resolved to perpetuate his name, not by engraving on one of the stones or pillars, but by so arranging all the parts of the front thereof, the windows, doors, projections, recesses, etc., that when the whole was finished, to the astonishment of all, there was the name of the architect, standing forth in bold relief, and so incorporated with the house that both must stand or fall together. So has this great truth been interwoven with the liturgy and offices of the church, that to obliterate it, you must destroy the whole.

† It is related of the celebrated Dr. Samuel Johnson, the giant of English literature, that breakfasting on a certain occasion with a friend, and perceiving that in saying grace he omitted the name of Christ, he was much affected and earnestly remonstrated with him on the subject, begging that he would never again be guilty of such an omission.

called upon to fall low on our knees before the Lord in humble supplication, and then to rise up and stand before Him and lift up our voices in praise? The primitive church had her days and seasons when all must kneel, and those on which it was forbidden to kneel, praise being comely on those days, and standing the comely posture for praise. Is it now our custom, when certain choice portions of the gospel are read, for the people to rise up and hear it standing, as if Christ himself were speaking? So did the Christians of old stand up and listen to the gospel. Do we on our first entrance into the church fall on our knees and offer up a short prayer in silence before the Lord? Do we in that most impressive service which invests the well-proved deacon with higher orders, call upon every soul in whom is the spirit of prayer to fall upon their knees, and for the space of a few moments engage in silent entreaty with the Lord, and is this ever so done as to surprise and overawe the whole assembly, and almost constrain the ungodly to pray? Why do we these things? Because the fathers did the same, only much more frequently in the midst of these solemn services ages since. Does the minister at this day, when about to break the bread and pour out the wine of our Lord's Supper to humble recipients, say to them in words commanding and encouraging, "Lift up your hearts," and the people immediately respond, "We lift them up unto the Lord?" These very words were taken warm from the lips of God's best ministers and best people in the best days of the church. By how many millions of God's ministers and saints have these words been uttered each Sabbath throughout all Christendom, from the times of which I speak to the present moment? In dispensing the sacred elements also, does the officiating priest or bishop, lifting up the same, utter the well known words, "The body or blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life." O who can number the myriads of voices that have uttered and ears that have heard these sweet sounds, these blessed benedictions in the use of the sacramental services from the times of the holy fathers to the present day! They were the very same then as now, saving only that change which must be in passing from one language to ano-

ther. And what shall I say of the Lord's prayer so often on our lips, so blended with every service of the church, proceeding first from the lips of Him who alone can teach us how to pray? This was the very beginning of all Christian liturgies. On this as a foundation were they built, the superstructures rising gradually and variously in the different churches planted by the apostles. But the foundation was never forgotten or removed. When we use these words in our various services, sometimes again and again on the same Sabbath, can we otherwise than think with emotions of gratitude to its author of that communion of the hearts of the faithful produced by the use of these same words for eighteen centuries every day, every hour, by the countless myriads that have uttered them? Is it not probable that more true prayer has gone up to heaven through the medium of these few words than of any or all other forms ever used among men?

To what has been said as to forms and prayers, I might add that as to all the great festivals of the church, such as Christmas, Easter, Whitsunday, we have not turned into any new and untried paths, but in celebrating them are merely walking in the old and well-trodden ways of our fathers. And who does not love them the more for the traces of our fathers' steps seen therein? And if any would wish to see other striking resemblances between things in our own and the primitive churches, let him only take up the various collections of canons which are yet extant, and he will be surprised and pleased to see how clearly we have copied after them in many of our own. Our church has wisely and reverently learnt many an useful lesson from the experience of primitive times. In the relative duties, rights and privileges of the clergy and laity, in the distinctions between the different orders in the ministry, in the deportment of bishops and dioceses one towards another, in the union of priests with the bishop in laying on of hands upon the candidates for the priest's office, and the number of bishops required for the consecration of a brother to the Episcopal office; in these and many such like things we have simply and strictly followed the example of the primitive churches.

In only one other respect will I allude to a happy resem-

blance. Our bishops, like those of primitive times, are, thank God, preachers of the gospel, examples in this as in all other things to other ministers. Nay, they must of necessity be more abundant in labours than all others if strength be given. Circumstances beyond our control have indeed diffused our labours over large tracts of country in search of the few shepherds with their small flocks scattered over the same; but as these circumstances shall change, and by the blessing of God our churches and ministers multiply, we shall gladly I trust in this respect also imitate the primitive church, and by timely and judicious divisions of our dioceses bring each congregation under the frequent sound of the bishop's voice, and let each chief shepherd know his sheep and be known of them. Now and then may each bishop of the church be in preaching as Paul was, and as he enjoined it upon Timothy and Titus to be. Like the primitive bishops may they be the chief preachers, full of sermons and exhortations, thus confirming all the churches and holding up the hands of every other preacher.

One remark permit me now to make, closing all I have to say on this part of my discourse. Concerning prayers, ceremonies, and the language of their creeds and some matters of discipline, there was at the first, even for a few centuries, some diversity among the churches, the substance of the faith being the same in all. But the true nature of Christian liberty was too well understood by them, and the spirit of Christian love was too strong in their hearts to let this diversity of form or language separate them from each other. They agreed thus to differ in things not essential to the faith, and lived so as to force their enemies to say, "See how these Christians love one another." May that same spirit prevail ever among us, as to things of minor importance, and as to doctrines too high for us.

The time came when it was expedient that a number of small and independent churches or dioceses should unite together in some common, well-digested liturgies, framed out of the many used, and in some common unvarying creeds as the Apostles and Nicene. In that respect also the church in America resembles the earlier churches. Though in some things distinct and independent, yet have we agreed in one

common Liturgy—the most perfect we think of all—and in some common principles and general laws, for the preservation of unity and peace. Long may that union subsist, and that Liturgy be maintained in its purity and integrity. Adhering to the wise policy which has hitherto governed all the acts of our General Convention, a policy so often and earnestly urged by the venerable father who is no longer to preside over our councils, that is, forbearing to legislate one step beyond the actual needs of the church, may we long exhibit to the world the delightful spectacle of a number of Christian societies, living together in happy harmony and meeting together to strengthen the bonds of love which have hitherto encircled them. And though it may be impossible for our ecclesiastical union to survive that political severance sometimes so fearfully threatened, yet who shall say, but that our happy meetings here from all parts of our land, and our union at all times in so many things which bind hearts together before the throne of heaven, may not under God postpone that day of political disunion, and the church, instead of being sustained and kept together by the state, be the means of supporting for a while her sinking pillars, her tottering walls?

II. In the second place, having, as was proposed, rejoiced to find ourselves walking in some of the good old paths of the Lord and his people, it would be well to inquire whether we are walking before the Lord in all things zealously as did our fathers. Whether we speak of the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles or the Fathers, they were truly and emphatically men of faith. Living at, or near unto, the time when either by angels, or in the person of Christ, God visited the earth and spake unto men, accompanying his word by wonderful signs, these men lived as “nothing doubting,” as though God had just left off from speaking unto them; there was no wavering—no halting between two opinions with them—no compromising with the world—no fearing of man. With a holy zeal and boldness they went forth to their duty, counting not life itself dear unto them, so they might secure the favour of heaven. Taking up their cross daily and following him, the first disciples of Christ boldly said, “Who can separate us from his love?” No peril, no tribulation, famine or sword moved them

from their integrity. They were ready at any moment to die for Christ. How bold were they to rebuke vice in every shape; yea, even to reprove kings at God's command! Whether it were Daniel in the court of Darius—Nathan in that of David—or Paul in the palace of the Cæsars—the Spirit of God spake boldly out by the mouths of these holy men. How Felix trembled before Paul the prisoner, when he reasoned on righteousness, temperance and judgment to come! How boldly did the same declare as to all the vices of men, secret or open, the gross or the pleasant ones—the revellings, the banquetings of the sons and daughters of pleasure, “That they who do such things shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven.” The canons, and the discipline of the first ages, show clearly to us what was the religion of those days, how separate from sinners, how unspotted from the world, both priests and people were required to be.* The rich were charged faithfully to abound in good works and be glad to distribute, and they set an example before the world never seen before.

The young were trained in paths of holiness in such a way as they never had been before, nor ever since. God's ancient people, the Jews, had done much in this way. Line upon line, precept upon precept, had they given to their children out of God's law, writing its precepts upon their gates, their

* The following canons show the sense of the primitive church as to certain evil places and practices.

Let the bishop, priest, or deacon who spends his time in dice or drinking either desist or be deposed; the sub-deacon, reader, singer, or layman be deposed.—35th of the apostolical canons so called.

In the Laodicean canons, 53, 54, 55, we find the following:—That they of the priesthood and clergy ought not to gaze at fine shows, at weddings, or other feasts, but before the musicians enter, to rise up and retreat. That they of the priesthood and clergy, or even laity, ought not to club together for great eating and drinking bouts. That Christians ought not to use wanton dancings at their marriages; but to have a modest dinner and supper.

Also in the African code in the 15th canon it is written, “Let not the sons of clergymen manage public shows, nor even be spectators of them: and it has always been enjoined on all Christians, that they go not where blasphemy is used.

In Bingham's *Antiquities*, as abridged by Henry, we find, page 239, the following statement of the sentiments and practice of the primitive church.

“Besides acts of impurity the church was strict in regard to all things that tended to it—as the writing or reading of lewd books, frequenting theatres or spectacles against modesty, promiscuous and wanton dancing, songs, riotous and intemperate feasting, etc. All these things were punished with excommunication and penance, and in the case of clergymen with degradation.”

windows, their doors, their garments, their foreheads, and their hands. Much has been done in these latter days in our blessed Sunday schools for the younger children. But what all this compared to the constant, daily, systematic, thorough instruction of the Christian youth in the catechetical schools of primitive times? What all done by ministers and others compared with the careful, prayerful, long-continued instruction of candidates for baptism? O that all our schools and colleges could be baptized as they were with the Holy Ghost! O that we were once more in that good old path in which the children of the faithful were trained for heaven. Never shall we have that great army of preachers without which the hosts of hell will not be vanquished, until our schools are consecrated to the Lord and used as nurseries for young soldiers of the cross.

Nor let us fear boldly to follow in that path so trodden by the preachers of the first ages of our religion—the path of zealous, frequent, faithful preaching of the gospel, that power of God to the salvation of the soul. The Saviour and his apostles took the lead. The fathers followed after. From house to house, in the temple, in the synagogue, in season, out of season, they preached the word of God. No matter who forbade, preach they would. No invidious comparisons were then made between prayers and sermons. Both were of God. Both were necessary. Many were the prayers, many were the sermons. The word preached, was yea and amen from the lips of many preachers, the one confirming what the other said, and the bishops crowning all with the word of exhortation and the blessing. The Jewish and Christian Sabbaths were both observed, and many were the days of prayer and exhortation beside; nor seemed it righteous overmuch to the faithful in that day thus often to meet together.

As to the preaching of God's word, my brethren, you well know how a time came when *that* almost ceased in the church of God, ceremonies and ordinances being nearly all that remained to the priest's office. But remember that religion, too, was well-nigh extinct at that time, Christianity being little more than a name or form. The Reformers were preachers, bold and fearless ones, and the Romanists dreaded

the sound of their voice even more than the thunder of the Vatican, for as a trumpet it proclaimed to the world all their abominations. O for thousands of such preachers as Paul, and Barnabas, and Chrysostom, and Cyprian, and Augustine, and Luther, and Calvin, and Melancthon, and Cranmer, and Latimer, and Ridley, and Hooper, to preach to this dull and lukewarm age, the glorious doctrines of a crucified Redeemer, to wake it up from that deathlike slumber which has come over it.*

Let me point you to another old and hallowed path, worthy to be trodden by far more than now seem willing to follow the footsteps of the Patriarchs, and Apostles, and Fathers. I mean the path that turns to the Gentiles. O for more of that spirit which Christ breathed into the apostles when he commanded them to go into all the world, preaching the gospel and baptizing in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. What must have been the zeal of those whose sound was so soon heard in all the world, their words reaching unto the ends of the earth? What necessity—what wo was upon

* It was frequently the case that two or three sermons were preached in succession at the same assembly, first by the presbyters and then by the bishop, who, when present, usually closed this part of the service. Thus the apostolical constitutions say, "When the Gospel is read, let the presbyters one by one, but not all, speak the word of exhortation to the people, and last of all, the bishop, who is the governor or pilot of the ship." The same thing appears from Chrysostom's sermons, preached when a presbyter at Antioch, in which he alludes to the bishop as intending to preach after him in some such form as this, "It is now time for me to keep silence, that our master may have time to speak." When two or more bishops happened to be together it was usual for several of them to preach in immediate succession, reserving the last place to the most venerable person. In some places they had a sermon every day, especially in Lent and during the festival days of Easter, and many passages of ancient authors speak of sermons twice a day upon special occasions. Before beginning the sermon it was usual in many places to say, "Peace be with you," or "The Lord be with you." To which the people answered, "And with thy spirit." This has been incorporated into our service. Sometimes at the beginning and at others in the midst of their sermons, they would address short invocations, as that which Ambrose is said to have used: "I beseech thee, O Lord, and earnestly entreat thee, give me an humble knowledge which may edify; put into my mouth the word of consolation, and edification, and exhortation. Let the words which thou givest thy servant be as the sharpest darts and burning arrows which may penetrate and inflame the minds of my hearers to thy fear and love." Their sermons were extemporaneous and sometimes pre-composed, and varied as to length from ten minutes to an hour. When more than one preached, they must have delivered the shorter exhortations or sermons.—See *Henry's Abridgment of Bingham*.

them, unless they preached the gospel every where. The field was the world. And, remember, the whole world was then heathen, except those who were worse than the heathen, having crucified the Lord of glory and who every where stirred up the less hostile Gentiles against the disciples of Christ. All the first preachers of the gospel were as our foreign missionaries, only in far greater force. To own, to name Christ, was danger; to preach him, death. O how many madmen were there in those days; the world being judge; nay, such Christians as many of our day being judges. What a missionary was Paul! Scarce recovered from the overpowering vision which struck him to the earth, and without conferring with flesh and blood, he went on a three years' mission into Arabia. Then for fourteen years what a wanderer! Look at the map of his journeyings by sea and by land, from city to city—from isle to isle—from continent to continent. Where shall we find him! Now at Jerusalem; now at Antioch; now at Athens; now at Corinth; now at Rome; now in Spain; now, perhaps, in the land of our fathers, on the shores of Britannia. Wherever the Roman eagle flapped its wing—wherever the Roman banner waved—there was Paul, preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentiles. A debtor he was, indeed, both to the Jews and Gentiles—the desire and prayer of his heart to God was that Israel might be saved. He could wish himself to be accursed from Christ for his brethren's sake. He was ready to die for them. He reasoned with them and persuaded them out of the scriptures in all their synagogues; but when they judged themselves unworthy of eternal life and put the gospel away from them, then said he, "Lo! we turn to the Gentiles." Neither did the other disciples wait in Jerusalem until it was a city of saints—neither tarried in Judea until it was as one rich garden of the Lord; but having preached first to the lost sheep of Israel, then, for the most part, scattered themselves far and wide, proclaiming to the then known world the glorious tidings of salvation through a crucified Redeemer. How could they do otherwise, believing, knowing what they did, concerning the heathen world, and having any bowels of compassion in them? What an account does St.

Paul, and all other missionaries since the days of Paul, give of the moral condition of the heathen! I shall not shock your ears or cover your faces with a blush by the recital of what you may read in his letter to the then lords of the earth—the proud Romans. Make what allowance we dare for the strong language of the impassioned Paul, still must we say, awful the condition of those who, dead in trespasses and sins, lived without hope and without God in the world, given up to the vilest affections, and with hearts so darkened as to worship the very stocks and stones of earth instead of the great Creator of the universe. O, brethren, what has become of the zeal and compassion which begun the conversion of the world? The spirit of missionaries and martyrs was then in every bosom. Whether they remained at home or went abroad, the heathen were all around them, and racks, and stakes, and scaffolds ever ready. But they courted death and longed for martyrdom, and thousands found the death they sought, and the martyrdom for which they longed. But we have none to spare—not a minister, say some, can be taken from this Christian land for the millions who are living and dying in pagan darkness. Not a life can now be periled in such a cause. Not a son or daughter can we devote to this service. Can this be uttered by any having the least connexion with a church which so boldly professes to walk in the old paths?

Old Abraham, at the command of God, could bind his son, his only son, and raise aloft his hand to strike the sacrificing knife to the heart of the child for whom he would have rejoiced to die. Old Abraham could leave his kindred and home, and ages beforehand go, “not knowing whither he went,” to take possession, in the name of the Lord, of the promised land. Moses could reject his royal hopes and refuse the riches of Egypt and lead forth the people of God through a dreary wilderness to the land of promise, though only permitted to view it from the top of the mount. But we, what trials will we endure, what sacrifices make in a cause still dearest to heaven of all causes? O, how lukewarm, how cowardly, how soon cast down and ready to despair, if nations are not born in a day under the feeble sound of one or two poor missionaries’ voice. What if the valiant reformers had been

such as we? They did not rush, I know, into the midst of the swarming millions of China, nor throw themselves upon the lost fields of Asia Minor and Africa; but then remember, that all Europe was again one great missionary field, where they had, at the peril of life, to contend in deadly strife for the faith once delivered to the saints. Again must the blood of the martyrs be the seed of the church, and the faithful fight against the very gates of hell. The contest was for the very existence of our holy religion in its purity and power. O think you if such men as Luther and Calvin, Cranmer and Latimer, Ridley and Hooper, were now amongst us, that they would hang back in heartless indifference and almost revile the generous movements which some would make in behalf of perishing millions? Brethren, if cold caution, hesitating doubt, penurious calculation, and slow movement in such a cause as this, be among the old paths of the Lord in which his church has walked in the times of her zeal and glory, then have I misunderstood my text, and let all that has been said pass for nought.

III. Having detained you already to an unusual, perhaps unreasonable length, can I dare ask that you will allow me to add to these congratulations and exhortations a very few words of caution and warning?

Too thankful we cannot be that God hath blessed us with the continuance of the primitive, apostolical form of government, and with the choicest prayers, and hymns, and creeds from the purest churches. They are a most inestimable blessing, admirably calculated to preserve the faith in its purity, the church in its unity, and for nourishing the very spirit of piety in the heart. Without such government and such established worship it would really seem impracticable to prevent divisions and heresies most injurious to the cause of religion. No talents, no learning, no zeal, no piety, seem to be sufficient to avert these evils without other aid. At all events it is conceded, even by many who walk not with us, that our polity and ritual do present very powerful barriers against the inroads of heresy and schism. But let us beware of the error of placing an undue reliance upon them. Mighty they may be, and under God certainly are, and yet of themselves

insufficient to avert any such evil from his church. By trusting too much to them we are tempted to neglect other things indispensably necessary. We may cry "the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we," while the Lord of the temple is not in us. The history of the church of God affords but too many a proof of this. There was a divine government in Israel; there was a temple worship at Jerusalem; there were prayers and services in the synagogues, in which the Saviour and the apostles did not hesitate to unite. Many of those prayers have come down to us to the present day, and some may perhaps have been mingled with the earlier liturgies, being only so changed as to suit the Christian dispensation. And yet the Saviour denounced the worshippers as corrupt and abominable, charged them with the hypocrisy of crying Lord, Lord, but not doing the will of God, drawing nigh to him with their lips, while their hearts were far from him; and let it also be remembered that heresies and divisions sprung up in the bosom of those churches which were built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, having creeds of the purest theology, and liturgies of most seraphic piety. In the use of those creeds and liturgies, and under that apostolic form of government, the spirit of religion nevertheless disappeared, while the form of godliness was retained long after the power of it ceased to be felt. While then a scriptural government and holy worship should be most carefully preserved, we must not imagine that they will avail for the promotion of true piety unless other things equally enjoined in the word of God be cultivated with a zeal becoming their importance.* The spirit of prayer must be nourished in all

* In proof of the assertion that the form of godliness may be retained long after the spirit is lost, let any one read the history of the council of Constance, so celebrated for its persecution of Huss and Jerome. Milner gives us the following reflections upon it. "Those who look only upon the external forms of religion might be tempted to think that the council of Constance was in general influenced by the Spirit of God. In all their public sessions they sang an anthem, and then prayed, kneeling. After having remained for some time in this posture, a deacon called out to them to rise; and then the President addressed himself to the Holy Ghost in a loud voice, in a collect, which, in very solemn and explicit terms, supplicated his effectual influence, that notwithstanding the enormity of their sins, which filled them with dread, he would deign to descend into their hearts, to direct them, to dictate their decrees and to execute them himself, and also to preserve their minds from cor-

hearts. The word of God must be diligently studied by all ranks and ages. Zeal and holiness must be urged upon all with the utmost importunity. The greatest care should be taken in the admission to holy orders. As it will ever be like priest, like people, let the bishops of the church take good heed on whom they lay ordaining hands, that they be men of God, moved to the work by the Holy Ghost, and then thoroughly furnished unto every good work. Let our theological seminaries be most anxiously watched and guarded, so that they send forth not merely shining, but much more burning lights into the world. Let the ministers of God add to prayers, and lessons, and ordinances, faithful and impassioned preaching, lifting up their voices like trumpets, and declaring to a lost world salvation only through a crucified Lord. Let them, as solemnly bound by their vows, exercise godly discipline, and guard well the altar. Let them not fill the churches with worldly professors who have scarce a name to live even among men, and before God are dead. Let them above all, watch over the rising generation, seeking to instruct their minds with the true knowledge of God's word, and to imbue their hearts with its very spirit, thus preparing them for a deliberate, enlightened and hearty reception of the rite of confirmation. Let the bishops lay their hands suddenly on no one, even in the rite of confirmation, for that also is a solemn ordination, and the ministers should take good heed how they present candidates for the same unto the bishop. Let that door of entrance be well guarded and the church is safe. Let it be thrown open, or hang loosely on its hinges, so that any may open and enter, and the church is dishonoured and becomes a by-word and a proverb among men. Let these and all other means for promoting zealous piety among ministers and people, be faithfully used, or vain will be our apostolic government, and venerable forms, and holy hymns, and doxologies,

rupt passions, and not suffer them, through ignorance or selfishness, to swerve from justice and truth. The ideas and perhaps words were, however, taken from better times, when the operations of the Holy Ghost were not only professed but felt in Christian assemblies. The forms of true religion, often remain a long time, after the spirit of it has been almost extinguished. Both the emperor Sygismund and his consort Barba, who were infamous for lewdness, attended the religious ceremonies of this council. Sygismund, in a deacon's habit, read the gospel, while the Pope celebrated mass."

coming down from primitive times. Our ministers, though they cannot preach heresy and schism, may, as too many have done, sink Christian doctrine into a mere meager morality on which the souls of the people famish ; and the people themselves, though holding fast the form of sound words, and joining in such prayers as angels might use, nevertheless be what too many in our own and mother church have been, a reproach to that church, and to Him who purchased it with his own precious blood.*

* The church required in the clergy an exemplary purity and gravity beyond that of other men. They were to draw the picture of all manner of virtues in their own lives, and set themselves as examples to the people. The priest's office is a more difficult province than that of leading an army or governing a kingdom, and requires an angelic virtue. His soul ought to be purer than the sun, that the Holy Spirit may never leave him desolate, but that he may always be able to say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."—*Chrysostom on the Priesthood.*

The clergy were required to exercise the most exemplary hospitality to the poor and strangers, and in order to this, to observe great frugality and simplicity in regard to their own personal expenses. They were not to affect state, have rich furniture, nor give sumptuous entertainments. They were required to be patterns of meekness, humility and gravity ; and the rules and canons of the church were very strict against all unbecoming levity of deportment, all scurrility, buffoonery and indecency of discourse.

The exemplary conduct of the Christian ministers, in the time of Julian the apostate, was such as to force him to propose them as examples to the heathen clergy, when he attempted to re-establish paganism.

"Priests, he said, should so live as to be copies of what they preached by their own lives, and dissolute ones should be expelled from their offices. Not only wicked actions but obscene and indecent language, should be avoided by them. No idle books and wanton plays, but divine philosophy, should be studied by them. They should learn sacred hymns by heart, should pray thrice or at least twice every day ; and when in their turn called on to attend the temple, they should never depart from it, but give up themselves to their office. At other times they should never frequent the forum, nor approach the houses of the great, unless with a view of procuring relief for the indigent, or to discharge some part of their office ; that in no case should they frequent the theatres, nor even be seen in the company of a charioteer, player or dancer. In every city the most pious and virtuous should be ordained, without regard to their circumstances. The godly training of their own families, and their compassionate care for the indigent, should be their best recommendation. The impious Galileans, he observed, by their singular benevolence, had strengthened their party, and heathenism had suffered by want of attention to these things." Such was the fire the apostate stole from heaven, and such his artifice in managing it ! These rules he must have derived from the Holy Scriptures, for they are not to be found in any of the heathen writers which he studied and admired. They are rules which well deserve the attention of Christian pastors in every age. In imitation of Christians he established schools for the education of youth. He appointed lectures on religion, stated times for prayers, monasteries for devout persons, hospitals and alms-houses for the poor and diseased and for strangers. These things he especially recommended in a letter to Arsacius, the chief priest of Galatia, in which he

In order to form a due estimate of our character and condition, our trials and duties at the present day, it would be well sometimes to look back to our past history in our own and mother country. Long and severe were the contests of our fathers with those who had corrupted religion in their land. Often was the victory gained and often lost, and sometimes it hung in long and painful suspense. The connexion which had long subsisted between the church and civil government made the battles more deadly and the issues more uncertain. Truth at length prevailed, but not without some admixture of error, the result of long established habits, and of circumstances not easy to be controlled. Some there were who became impatient of remaining evils, and too strongly demanded immediate and total reform, proposing at the same time changes which would indeed have marred the fair face of our Zion. The puritans, by insisting too strenuously on some things, drove their opponents into the opposite errors, and what with its connexion with government, the character of many of its clergy,* and the wealth and fashion of the nobility who mostly adhered to it, the church was justly liable to the charge of having at her communion very many of the worldly and fashionable whose lives illy consisted with the solemn vows uttered at the table of the Lord. In establishing the

tells him, it was that advanced the impious religion of the Christians; that it was their kindness to strangers, their care in burying the dead, and their affected gravity. He bids him warn the heathen priests to avoid play-houses and taverns and sordid employments. Hospitals should be erected in every city for the reception of all sorts of indigent persons. The Galileans, he said, relieve both their poor and ours."

* When I think of what was the character of very many of the Episcopal clergy in England formerly, and what still is the character of not a few at this day, and of a large number of those sent over to raise up the church in America, a character resulting a great measure, from the peculiar circumstances of her history, and think upon the great change which has taken place in England, and the still greater in our own land, I am reminded of the following passage in Bishop Burnet's history of his own times.

"I shall conclude all that I have to say in this place of the affairs of Rome, with a lively saying of queen Christina, to myself at Rome. She said it was certain the church was governed by the immediate care and providence of God; for none of the four popes that she had known, since she came to Rome, had common sense." As God works by certain instruments in effecting all his glorious reformations, so I cannot but think that the effective instruments, in this reformation, are our admirable Liturgy and offices, and the well ordered government with which we are blessed.

church in our own country, we are found in circumstances subjecting us to some of the same temptations and the same reproaches. In the providence of God, in very many of our churches is to be found a large proportion of the wealthy, the educated, the honourable of the land, who, as in all other countries and ages, are liable to their peculiar temptations. Those temptations, instead of being adduced as excuses for their faults, or pleas for ministerial negligence, should only furnish stronger motives for ministerial fidelity and zeal. It is ours especially to charge the rich of this world that they be not high minded—that they be glad to distribute of their store—to warn the lovers of pleasure that they are dead even while they live—to say to all, if any love the world the love of the Father is not in them. 'This is our most bounden duty, and to shrink from it is cowardice and sin. This is one of the old paths in which God would have us to walk. The sentiments of the primitive church as to all those amusements, those revelings and banquetings for which even some professing Christians plead, are well known by the canons which are still extant, and the discipline which was exerted. Our general conventions and some of our state conventions, have delivered their sentiments in unequivocal terms concerning them—nor delivered them in vain. Just sentiments and consistent practice on these subjects prevail more and more throughout all our borders. Few comparatively are those who will so far oppose public sentiment, so mortify the ministers of God, so grieve the best friends of religion and the church, so give occasion to its enemies to triumph, as to frequent and encourage places or scenes of ungodly mirth. Those few, even if not so far transgressing the letter of the law as to subject themselves to the discipline of the church, will yet, for violating its spirit, only render themselves the more objects of remark and condemnation. But to them would we say, lifting up our voice, if it were possible, so as to be heard through all the borders of our Zion, where is your love for religion, for the church of God, for our special branch of it, that you will consent still to keep up this old reproach, that by your example you will drive the humble and pious inquirer to some other fold, yea,

that you are so acting that some of your own children, perhaps, if ever the grace of God shall take possession of their hearts, may renounce the church of their parents and blame you for the deed? I will only add, that of all the churches in the land ours is that one whose members and ministers ought to be most particular and faithful as to these things of which I speak.

In relation to our Christian friends of other communions, who, I well know, often charge us with far more of worldliness than is justly due, may God give us grace to cherish and exhibit the loving and charitable spirit of our divine Master. They exist in great numbers and respectability throughout our land. The image of Christ is upon thousands and tens of thousands whom we hope to see and love in heaven. The zeal, and piety, and talents, and learning of many of them God is pleased to make much use of for his own gracious purposes in our own and other lands. We differ from them in points which seem to us important, and think that much of the unhappy discord which destroys their peace results from defects in those things wherein we differ. Let us not severely upbraid or boastingly triumph, but rather sympathize with them and pray that God may direct all to his glory. Let us candidly acknowledge and truly love all that is good in them, calling nothing common or unclean which God hath cleansed. In so doing we shall walk in the old paths of our fathers, whose mild and tolerant spirit ever shrunk from the bitterness of invective and the cruelty of persecution. I speak of those who have left to us, in our articles and liturgy, an impress of their own minds and hearts. The secular arm may have been sometimes raised in anger, may have bathed its unhallowed sword in blood, and even some of the ministers of God may have lifted up their voices to call down fire from heaven, but we look in vain through the articles, offices and prayers of the church for one unkind word. While firmly maintaining our own distinctive principles, and walking by our own rules, let us exhibit the same spirit of kindness to those who differ from us; and, among other results, the disposition already so strongly manifested on the part of numbers not trained in our communion, will increase more and more, and thousands now

tossed about by every wind of doctrine and driven to and fro on the waves of the tempestuous sea of controversy, will gladly seek an asylum in our own more peaceful bosom.

I have now only to add, that in all our expectations and hopes, and efforts for our beloved church, we shall be greatly encouraged by casting a filial eye towards the church of our fathers. Ever eventful and deeply interesting has been her history. In the midst of foes, various, numerous and violent, who have ever sought and prophesied her downfall, she yet survives, yet lives on the soil which was enriched by the blood of her martyrs, where she has long stood, the mightiest bulwark of the reformation, the right arm of the Lord, which he stretched forth in defence of his persecuted truth. Never were her foes more numerous, or more violent, or the weapons of their warfare more deadly, than at the present time. But never were her friends more true and more united, and never did the Lord appear more clearly on her side to fight her battles. Not with armies and fleets, not with treasures of silver and gold, not with edicts of kings and parliaments does he come forth to her rescue, but he comes in the spirit of holiness, putting new life and zeal into all orders of her ministers and ranks of her friends; he comes in that noble spirit of liberality which pours its annual millions of voluntary contributions into the hands of those devoted ones who are building churches at home and sending missionaries abroad, and are resolved to leave nothing undone which shall make the church of our forefathers a praise to him on the earth.* She exhibits to

* The following account of the origin of some of those excellent societies, which have so blessed England and the world, is from Bishop Burnet's history of his own times, which, as well as other works of this eminent prelate, are worthy of frequent perusal, and are especially recommended to our young candidates for the ministry.

"In King James' reign, the fear of popery was so strong, as well as just, that many, as well in and about London, began to meet often together, both for devotion and for their further instruction. Things of that kind had been formerly practised only among the puritans and dissenters, but these were of the church, and came to their ministers to be assisted with forms of prayer and other directions. They were chiefly conducted by Dr. Beveridge and Dr. Horneck. Some disliked this, and were afraid it might be the original of new factions and parties; but wiser and better men thought it was not fit nor decent to check a spirit of devotion at such a time. It might have given scandal, and it seemed a discouraging of piety, and might be a mean to drive well meaning persons over to the dissenters. After the Revolution, their societies

the world the uncommon spectacle of a church without revolution, renewing herself unto greater zeal and holiness, rapidly improving in the character of her clergy, and bidding fair to command the increasing veneration of the good and pious of every name. Her enemies may assail her outworks, may prostrate some of them to the ground, may seize upon her treasures with sacrilegious hands, may rob the Lord of his revenues, but the citadel is safe; for the Spirit of the Lord is there. Let us seek to follow her noble example, by a faithful adherence to the spirit of our articles and services, avoiding whatever deserves to be lamented in her, the result of human infirmity and of those peculiar disadvantages under which she has ever laboured.

Our career, brethren and friends, has but just begun. Thus far God has blessed us. Our outward prosperity is certainly not small. Heaven grant that it be not too great for us. Let us not be highminded but fear, remembering that

grew more numerous, and for a greater encouragement to devotion, they got such collections to be made, as to maintain many clergymen to read prayers in so many places, and at so many different hours, that devout persons might have that comfort at every hour of the day. There were constant sacraments every Lord's day in many churches: there were both great numbers and greater appearances of devotion at prayers and sacraments, than had been observed in the memory of man. These societies resolved to inform the magistrates of swearers, drunkards, profaners of the Lord's day, and of lewd houses; and they threw in the part of the fine given by law to the informers, into a stock of charity. From this they were called societies of reformation. Some good magistrates encouraged them, but others treated them roughly. As soon as Queen Mary heard of this, she did by her letters and proclamations encourage their good designs, which were afterwards prosecuted by the late king. Other societies set themselves to some charity schools for teaching poor children, for clothing them and binding them out to trades. Many books were printed and sent over the nation by them to be freely distributed. These were called societies for propagating Christian knowledge. By this means some thousands of children are now well educated and carefully looked after. In many places of the nation the clergy met often together to confer about matters of religion and learning, and they got libraries to be raised for their common use. At last a corporation was created by the late king, for propagating the gospel among infidels, for settling schools in our plantations, for furnishing the clergy that were sent there, and sending missionaries among such of our plantations as were not able to provide pastors for themselves. It was a glorious conclusion of a reign that was begun with preserving our religion, thus to create a corporation propagating it to the remotest parts of the earth and among infidels. There were very liberal subscriptions made to it by many of the bishops and clergy, who set about it with great care and zeal. Upon the queen's accession to the crown, they had all possible assurances of her favour and protection, of which, upon every application, they received very eminent marks."

our numerical increase in ministers and churches is not an infallible measure of our spiritual advancement. Let us, then, rejoice with trembling, or the intoxication of success may be at once the mean and omen of our fall, and our fall be the more disastrous by reason of our present elevation. Let us follow peace with all men, imitating the example of that venerable patriarch of our Zion, who lived and died in this city of brotherly love, to whose peace he so greatly contributed, by whose citizens he was so highly honoured, so sincerely beloved, whose death created a general pause along all its streets, and whose funeral procession was one long unbroken line from the door of his house to the mouth of his sepulchre. May his mantle descend not on one of us, but on all. Imbibing his truly catholic spirit, adhering to his judicious, moderate, and true interpretation of our standards, avoiding all metaphysical discussions and doubtful disputations, we shall agree on all subjects where agreement is necessary, and readily consent to differ, where difference is unimportant.*

* The following, according to Milner, are the sentiments of Luther on a subject which has so often distracted the minds of men and dishonoured, by bitter controversy, the church of God. Our church in this country has thus far escaped and long may it be preserved from the evil.

"The Saxon reformer, though he denied as we have repeatedly seen, the existence of all human ability to save a lost sinner, as also the inefficacy of all human qualifications to merit reward; and though he ascribed salvation to grace alone and to the merciful will of God, yet on the delicate question of predestination ever displayed that moderation by which his mind was uniformly influenced in all doctrinal inquiries, except one, (that of consubstantiation) and content with what scripture had revealed, he never undertook to explain this difficult subject with any thing like systematic precision; much less did he ever think proper to propose the arduous speculation, concerning the divine decrees, as necessary articles of a Christian's faith. It happened, however, that a neighbouring minister, with a view of comforting one of his flock, whose mind was much distressed, respecting the secret counsels of God, was desirous of obtaining from Luther more satisfaction on this head than could be collected from his writings. This circumstance gave to our reformer the occasion of writing an epistle, in which he says: "Many have perished in the indulgence of such curious inquiries; it is a temptation which leads even to blasphemy. I myself, by giving way to it, have more than once been reduced to the last extremity. We poor mortals by faith can scarcely comprehend a few rays of the divine promise, or receive in practice a few sparks of the divine precepts; and yet, feeble and impure as we are, we rashly attempt to fathom the majesty of God in all his brightness. Do we not know that his ways are past finding out? Instead of using well the mild light of the divine promises, which is adapted to our faculties, we rush, with

Then shall we extort from every mouth that highest of all praises, "Behold how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Then shall our Zion be as "a city that is at unity with itself." Then shall "peace be within our walls and plenteousness within our palaces," and surely, every good man in our land will wish us prosperity. AMEN.

eyes of moles, to view at once the majestic splendour of the Deity. What wonder then if his glory should overwhelm us in the attempt to investigate it!"

The author of this sermon was acquainted, while at college, with a young licensed minister of very superior talents, who was much given to speculation on the divine decrees and those subjects connected with the same. That gentleman has since, by the force of his commanding talents and great worth, held high stations in the literary world, and still continues to do so. It was the lot of the author to meet with him a few years since, when the old subject came under consideration, and the able divine, and accomplished scholar, and acute reasoner, made the following statement: "After we parted I continued passionately devoted to the study of those subjects, and was satisfied that I could master them thoroughly, and present to the world a clear exhibition of them. I gave myself up to them almost entirely for ten years, still resolving to understand them; but at the end of ten years, I found myself in utter darkness, without any fixed opinion or belief on the subject. I then laid them aside entirely and now never read or think about them. I have but one answer to all who ask my opinion, and that is, 'I know nothing about them.'"

We are informed that in the sixth century, Christians had drawn the abstrusest niceties into controversy, and had thereby so destroyed peace, love and charity, that they lost the whole substance of religion, and in a manner drove Christianity quite out of the world, so that the Saracens, taking advantage of their differences, found it an easy matter to establish Mahometanism upon the ruins of Christianity. From this lamentable fact let Christians learn an instructive lesson.

A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT ACWORTH,

BEFORE THE

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

IN SAID TOWN,

ON LORD'S DAY, MARCH 8, 1829.

BY PHINEHAS COOKE,
LATE PASTOR OF SAID CHURCH.

Published by request.

WINDSOR;

PRINTED AT THE CHRONICLE PRESS, BY JOHN C. ALLEN.

1829.

The two following Sermons are affectionately dedicated to the people of my late charge, at whose request they appear in their present form. The difference between them *now* and *when* delivered, is trivial—no more than was necessary in revising what had been prepared in haste, amid many parochial duties, and anxieties.

SERMON.

ACTS, 20 : 32.

AND NOW BRETHREN, I COMMEND YOU TO GOD, AND TO THE WORD OF HIS GRACE, WHICH IS ABLE TO BUILD YOU UP, AND TO GIVE YOU AN INHERITANCE AMONG ALL THEM THAT ARE SANCTIFIED.

THESE were a part of the last words of Paul to the Church at Ephesus. He was just finishing his labours among them, in which he ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. "I have," said he, "coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that labouring ye ought to support the weak ; and to remember the Lord Jesus, how he said it is more blessed to give than to receive. And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him ; sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they should see his face no more."

If there is a scene on earth, touching to pious sensibility, it is the parting of a minister with his Church, when God had crowned their union with signal blessings. Waiving those thoughts on this subject which the occasion naturally suggests, with humble diffidence I will make the commendation of the Apostle my own. *I commend you, brethren, to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you*

up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.

The question before us, is,—*What is implied by a minister commending his Church to God, and to the word of his grace?*

1. That his previous labours among them, without that perfecting which God's grace alone can give, will avail nothing. The planting and watering of a Church is distinct from its growth in grace. A minister may do the former, but it is God only, who can promote the latter. A Pastor may be the honoured instrument under God, of bringing many souls into Christ's visible Church; but such is the deceitfulness of the human heart, and so frequent are apostacies, that he dare not warrant a single one to reach the kingdom of heaven. "Grace must complete what grace begins." Although I may charitably hope, that most of the members added to this Church since my becoming its pastor, will persevere unto the end, yet this hope depends entirely on the power and grace of God, that he will perfect that which he has begun. To whom, therefore, but unto him, can I commend you? He has the words of eternal life.

2. Commending a Church to God, further implies, that he is able to bless the means employed by their Pastor to build them up, after he ceases to instruct them. The apostle draws this conclusion, when he enjoins on the Church at Ephesus to watch, and remember the warnings which he gave them, night and day, with tears. God is able to stir up your minds by way of remembrance, and to enable you to give an earnest heed to the things ye have heard, lest at any time, you let them slip.

It may be safe to believe, that *some* truth has been dispensed to you, which, as yet, has not produced in your hearts its legitimate fruit. Much seed has been sown, which, I trust, has not yet come up. Its future growth depends on the fertilizing influence of God's spirit. The number of sermons I have preached to you, will not vary far from two thousand. Allow each discourse to contain but one truth, which if duly regarded would save a soul; has the harvest, as yet, been in pro-

proportion to the sowing? There has not been *one fold*; where there might have been, some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred. According to this calculation, much of this truth has been forgotten or mis-applied. When will this seed come up? Will it come at all? *O, Lord God, thou knowest.* May I not hope, some of these truths will be remembered after my departure? Such things have been. One has sowed, and another reaped. In order for such a desirable event, the hearers will strive to recollect the word which has been dispensed to them, and to cultivate it with prayers, and tears, that it may one day become a savour of life unto life.

3. To commend a Church to God, and to the word of his grace, also implies faith in *one*, who is able to build you up in *this world*. All the hope I have that you will retain your present standing, and rise yet higher in spiritual things, is, that the great Head of the Church will keep you, and prosper you. What warrant have I, or what have you, that after my departure, grievous wolves will not enter in among you, not sparing the flock? None but the divine protection. Could you immediately obtain another Pastor, far superior to him who now retires, you are sensible, he could not build you up, without the divine blessing. Faith in God, is the only alternative. There is my hope, that you will keep together, and will preserve the unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace. I trust, Brethren, these are no new thoughts to you. We have, while together, witnessed so frequently, blessings from the upper and nether springs, that we surely ought, by this time, to be no strangers from whence cometh our help. But lest you should say, "there is no danger but we shall keep united, no danger but we shall settle another minister soon," I would exhort you, with deep humility to look to Him who alone can bring this about, and dispose your hearts to unite in so desirable an event. Nothing is indeed wanting to effect this great object, but humble reliance on God, and united, vigorous exertion among yourselves. Forget not for one moment, that a faithful minister is one of Christ's ascension gifts. Such a Pastor is never sent, but in answer to the prayers of the faithful. Christ, the

great shepherd and bishop of souls, sends his under shepherds where he pleases. To him I commend *you*, and pray that he will shortly send you a pastor after his own heart.

4. The commendation in the text further implies, that God would at last, give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.

The Apostle, when taking leave of the Ephesian Church, looks beyond their present establishment in the faith—he desires for them a place amidst the Church triumphant.

Entire sanctification is a mark, at which every Christian should aim. An inheritance among the sanctified, would be a seat in heaven. This is the final goal to which you, my brethren, profess to be bound. The journey you have begun, leads to the heavenly Canaan. The intermediate steps you are now taking. Many of these, you have taken with me. Not a few in this Church, began their first step in the divine life, under my guidance. We have taken sweet counsel together, and have walked to the house of God in company. Together, we have prayed and praised, and have often sat at the same communion table. These are the ways which lead to an inheritance among them that are sanctified. Press forward to the mark for the prize. “He that endureth unto the end, shall be saved.”

Remember, dear brethren, the means by which these glorious benefits will redound to you, is, by the attention paid the *word of grace*. Whatever progress you have made in holiness, has arisen from the attention you have paid the written and preached word, through the aid of the Spirit. This has raised you to what you are ; and it is this which must continue to build you up.

It is remarked by all who know the circumstances of this Church and people, that for a course of years, you have been signally prospered in the things of religion. It may be proper to inquire, what have been the distinguishing marks of that word of grace, which has been delivered unto you, and through which you have been so greatly prospered? You have been taught that the heart of man, by nature, is *entirely* alienated

from God, and except he be renewed in the temper of his mind, by the Holy Spirit, he never can enter into the kingdom of heaven—that men do no holy actions in the sight of heaven, before they are regenerated, because such can result only from saving faith—that repentance is the imperious duty of the sinner, and in working out his salvation, is as necessary as the atonement of Christ—that in the dispensation of grace, God acts as a sovereign, claiming the right of having mercy on whom he will, where all are unworthy,—that men are moral agents, and may, if they will, avoid the evil, and choose the good,—that all who are born of the Spirit, will be kept by the power of God, unto salvation,—that, from first to last, our salvation is procured by the precious blood of Christ, who in his divine nature, is equal with God,—and that the rewards of the righteous and wicked, are alike, eternal.

Believing these fundamental truths, and adopting that practice which naturally flows from such belief, is that which has built up this Church, and given it its signal prosperity. A bare recital of these doctrines, once drove from your communion table, one who intruded himself without the wedding garment,—who felt their power to condemn, but we fear, not as yet, to convert. “Of what almighty force they are.”—Why should I not then, on leaving you, enjoin a continuance in the same truths which have proved so efficacious? You know by observation, and many of you by experience, the power they have had in convicting and converting souls. You know they have been instrumental in promoting and carrying on revivals of religion. I verily believe, you will not exchange this system of religion for any other.

In preaching, and defending, these doctrines of grace, I am sensible some have thought they were hard sayings, and difficult to be borne. Some, in this church, once thought they never should believe them, although they now form the sheet-anchor of their hope. The reason of this was, because “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.” But to the eye of faith, no other plan of salvation seems worthy of him, who came into the world to save sinners.

I leave you, brethren, professedly rooted and grounded on this system; Jesus Christ, and him crucified, its chief cornerstone. Abide on this rock, and it shall be well with you. Should any members in this Church apostatize from this system of faith, they are hereby reminded, that they will fall from that which they once solemnly professed to believe, in the presence of God, angels and men.

I leave you, at a time, when, if ever, it is important that a professed Christian should know, in whom he has believed. I trust, you are able to discern the signs of the times, and that you will contend earnestly for the faith, once delivered to the saints. May the Almighty shield you from error, fatal to the soul, and enable you at last to come off more than conquerors, through him that loved you and gave himself for you.

I leave you, not as I found you, a small church, having never enjoyed a season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. But I leave you, after having witnessed many wonders of Divine grace, and after you have been greatly increased, with the increasings of God. I intreat you, after I am gone, leave not that way in which God has so prospered you. "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls." "Let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ, that whether I come to see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving *together*, (not apart) for the faith of the gospel."

By all that is valuable in the religion of Jesus, by all that is lovely in the ties of Christian fellowship, I beseech you to remain *united*. I repeat it, do not let divisions creep in among you after my departure. We have had the advice of a candid, judicious, and I trust, pious council, that it was best for us, and Zion at large, that we should separate. Our only conclusion is, that their decision is the will of God. They prayed much for divine direction, before they came to this result. If it is viewed by any of you as a judgment, be humble under the afflictive hand of God. Your minister may be removed from you, because some of you valued him too much, and others too

little. I would say to any who feel a peculiar attachment for their retiring Pastor, that the manifestation of their attachment, most agreeable to him, will be to love their brethren, and strive to promote union.

Finally—Dear brethren and sisters, remember me in your prayers, that utterance may be given to me in some part of God's vineyard, that I may open my mouth boldly, and make known to them the mystery of the gospel.



81
A

SERMON

PREACHED IN THE

CHURCH IN BRATTLE SQUARE,

DECEMBER 1, 1833,

THE LORD'S DAY AFTER THE DECEASE OF

MISS ELIZABETH BOND.

BY JOHN G. PALFREY.

BOSTON:

NATHAN HALE, 14 WATER STREET.

1833.

4947
At the Regular Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Church in Brattle Square, in Boston, holden Tuesday evening, Dec. 3d, 1833 :

VOTED,—That this Committee, sensibly affected by the dispensation of Divine Providence in removing by death one of the younger members of the Society, return their thanks to the Reverend Professor PALFREY for the appropriate notice which he took of the melancholy event, in his Sermon delivered on Lord's day, December 1st,—and in the belief that his improvement of this distressing bereavement should be preserved for the benefit of the Society, do respectfully request of him a copy of his Sermon for the press.

A true copy from the Records.

Attest—IVER J. AUSTIN, Clerk.

SERMON.

JOHN XVII. 4.

I HAVE GLORIFIED THEE ON THE EARTH. I HAVE FINISHED THE WORK
WHICH THOU GAVEST ME TO DO.

OF course, no other being upon earth can use this language, with a like fulness of meaning to what was conveyed in it by our Lord. The difference between its force, as employed by him and by others, must needs be two-fold. The work, appointed by his Father to be done by him, immeasurably exceeded in importance every work which is committed by the same universal Disposer to other hands; and he did his prescribed task thoroughly, while others, who the nearest approach him, at best leave some deficiency and imperfection in the accomplishment of theirs.—But still the aim to be contemplated by each and every one of us,—the object for which God made us to live, and the object for which we should desire to live,—is exactly described in the same terms,—the finishing of the work, greater or less, which God has appointed to us respectively to do; and in that sense of the words in which they have close interest for us, we shall, in the divine estimation, be held to have finished that work which we have heartily desired, and strenuously endeavoured to accomplish, though not all

the results at which we had been aiming should prove to be achieved.

And then as to defective accomplishment of our prescribed task in life, it has not that connexion which it may be hastily imagined to have, with a longer or shorter duration of life. By one whose years God has lengthened out, the work of a long life is the work appointed by him to be done. That of a short life, is the work which he has assigned to one recalled in childhood or in youth. If death separates a young friend from me, I may mourn his loss greatly on other accounts, but not because time has been denied him to complete his task. For his time was the very measure of his task. I cannot deplore him as having been privileged in this respect less than others. I cannot admit the idea of any life, in an exact way of speaking, being prematurely closed. Opportunity is the eternal limit of responsibility. "She hath done what she could," the language of our Lord's commendation of Mary, embodies the majestic spirit of the requisitions of his Gospel; and the fair form which I lay in the earth in the glory of its spring promise, is as ripe for heavenly honours, if the brief allotted season have been used as well,—as that which has come down to its resting-place bending under the venerable decrepitude of a hundred winters.

Having my reflections naturally directed to the subject, by an event of the week, which has made a great impression on the minds, and touched a deep chord in the hearts of not a few of us here present, young, and middle aged, and old,—I am going, my

friends, to present a few thoughts relating to the place of duty assigned by providence, in its universal distribution of reasonable and useful service, to young persons of the more retired sex ;—the task which God their Maker sent them here to do ;—the work, which God their Judge will look to them to finish before they proceed to those of maturer life, or are arrested, should such be their lot, on its threshold. I know, that happily the responsibilities and dignity of the season of youth are generally better estimated and more urgently pressed, in our times, than they have been used to being heretofore. But do there yet remain no lingering traces of that somewhat arrogant manly assumption, that, as to men are committed the most prominent trusts of society, the minds which are destined to that service are to be the great object of the philanthropist's and patriot's care ? I care not to strike that balance, if I might. What concerns the individual for time and eternity, is, that his own work, whatever it be and of whatever relative consideration, be well performed ; and what interests the whole is, not that one or another sphere of duty be ascertained to be of primary account, but that every sphere be well filled, each several relation conscientiously sustained ; and sure I am that that, to which I invite your attention, is perceived at once to have a rank in the social system, which there is no need to resort to disparaging comparisons to establish or to set forth.

When we speak of the duties of any specified age or other condition, it is of course not any such general obligations that we mean to enforce,—belonging

alike to all conditions,—as those of cultivating and developing in all conduct the spirit of christian self-control, benevolence, and devotion ; but simply of the manner in which christian principles are to be applied and manifested in the distinguishing occasions of the condition in question.—I observe then, first, that, in the common course of things, the work given to a young female to do, is the blessed one of a good daughter.—A good daughter !—there are other ministries of love more conspicuous than hers, but none in which a gentler, lovelier spirit dwells, and none to which the heart's warm requitals more joyfully respond.—There is no such thing as a comparative estimate of a parent's affection for one or another child. There is little which he needs to covet, to whom the treasure of a good child has been given. But a son's occupations and pleasures carry him more abroad, and he lives more among temptations, which hardly permit the affection, that is following him perhaps over half the globe, to be wholly unmingled with anxiety, till the time when he comes to relinquish the shelter of his father's roof for one of his own. While a good daughter is the steady light of her parent's house. Her idea is indissolubly connected with that of his happy fireside. She is his morning sun-light, and his evening star. The grace, and vivacity, and tenderness of her sex have their place in the mighty sway which she holds over his spirit. The lessons of recorded wisdom which he reads with her eyes, come to his mind with a new charm as they blend with the beloved melody of her voice. He scarcely knows weariness which her song does

not make him forget, or gloom which is proof against the young brightness of her smile. She is the pride and ornament of his hospitality, and the gentle nurse of his sickness, and the constant agent in those nameless, numberless acts of kindness, which one chiefly cares to have rendered because they are unpretending but all-expressive proofs of love. And then what a cheerful sharer is she, and what an able lightener of a mother's cares ! what an ever present delight and triumph to a mother's affection ! Oh how little do those daughters know of the power which God has committed to them, and the happiness God would have them enjoy, who do not, every time that a parent's eye rests on them, bring rapture to a parent's heart. A true love will almost certainly always greet their approaching steps. That they will hardly alienate. But their ambition should be not to have it a love merely, which feelings implanted by nature excite, but one made intense, and overflowing, by approbation of worthy conduct ; and she is strangely blind to her own happiness, as well as undutiful to them to whom she owes the most, in whom the perpetual appeals of parental disinterestedness do not call forth the prompt and full echo of filial devotion.

A sister's duties, secondly, belong to the place in life of which I speak ; and in the daily communications of domestic society, what a blessing is a sister's friendship, when it assumes its appropriate character, experienced to be. How much is constantly within her power, of all that goes to make home a happy place to those who are objects, with her, of the same parental care. As they advance together,

from infancy to their places of separate service, how much of the promise which others put forth, of the enjoyment which others experience and impart, of the docility which they manifest, and the improvement which they make, depends on the influence which goes forth from her. How large and cherished a place does a good sister's love always hold in the grateful memory, with which one who has been blessed with the benefits of this relation, looks back to the home of his childhood. How many are there, who, in the changes of maturer life, have found a sister's love, for themselves and others dearer than themselves, their ready and adequate resource. With what a sense of security is confidence reposed in a good sister, and with what assurance that it will be uprightly and considerately given, is her counsel sought. How intimate is the friendship between such sisters, not widely separated in age from one another. What a reliance for warning, excitement, and sympathy, has each secured in each. How many are the brothers, to whom, when thrown into circumstances of temptation, the thought of a sister's purity has been as a constant holy presence, rebuking every licentious thought. I suppose that among securing influences exerted from external sources upon the minds of young men, there is scarcely any to which more importance demands to be attached, than to their sense of the worth of a sister's esteem, their desire of gratifying her fond ambition for them, the sentiments of delicacy, which are inspired in her society, the taste for other improving society, which is there made to grow up, and the facilities for it which

she is able to afford. Unpretending to authority, and incapable of coercion, a sister's mild influence has all the greater power to soften the harshness of a rude character, and to check the excesses of adventurous or passionate impetuosity. And her unassuming example to the younger members of a household,—the example of a somewhat more discreet and experienced equal, with interests the same as their own, and feelings and views not so dissimilar as those of parents are liable to be supposed, with constant opportunities to insinuate easily her views of duty, and recommend them by minute but acceptable kindnesses,—possesses a power over those younger minds which is all but absolute. No! let not any of my young hearers, who are sisters, dream that they can be acting on a light responsibility. A serious charge has been given them, and serious consideration becomes them how they shall fulfil the trust.

I might go on to speak of the duties belonging to the relation of friendship, as having a place among those of that class of persons to which these remarks refer; and certain it is that, in favorable instances, that sentiment is known to subsist between them in extraordinary constancy, purity, and warmth, and to produce, in respect to character, a vast amount of mutually beneficial results. But the duties of friendship between such parties are in no respect different from what they are in other instances, nor do any peculiar considerations belong to the case, adding to, or qualifying the statement, that a person of the class in question, like other persons, in being a good friend, makes excellent use of christian principles,

and becomes a great benefactor.—I proceed therefore to speak of duties of the same class, belonging to them, in a wider relation, that of members of society. And here the great consideration is one, which I thank God many of them do not overlook, though possibly some of their number, as well as some who are not of their number, may. While other persons are members of society for mutual improvement and service, they are not members of it merely for their own pleasure and display. God forbid that they should be, or should be thought to be. No! let them seek with a reasonable, and that too they will find the most successful aim, to invest themselves with that peculiar attractiveness which God has made to belong to their age and sex. It is right and becoming that they should do so. But let them not meanwhile forget that they are exposed, and short-lived, and intelligent, and immortal, and accountable beings as much as any of the rest of us; that, as much as any of us, they have solemn duties to do, and souls, formed for happiness or misery, to save. I do not think, that I am liable here to be misunderstood, as if I were an indiscriminating ranter against the pleasures of society. There are few things, which for myself I like better. The pleasures of society, rightly sought and profited by, are the pleasures of taste, and intellect, and benevolence, and these are noble parts and prerogatives of our nature. No! as much grace, and ease, and accomplishment, and fascination even, as you will,—the more the better, provided better things are not sacrificed in their attainment or use;—and I do not find that they have

commonly the least of them, who have the most of what, taken for their basis, gives them a substantial worth. But let not any, if any such there should ever be, who allow fops and not men or women of sense to have the excitement and direction of their feeble and worthless ambition,—whose most serious comparison of opinions is with their dress-maker,—let not any such suppose that they are finishing the work which providence has given to them to do. Providence has dealt more kindly with them. What reason have they to think it so averse as to have condemned them alone to such a deplorable condition of unprofitableness? No! if others are bound to be rational, and thoughtful, and useful,—if others are invited to be happy, so are they. If others are able to go into society to improve and purify while they grace it, so, with the proper pains, are they in their measure,—and their measure is an ample one; for the very attractions, the sense of which, if they are light-minded, may bewilder them,—give them a vast power to influence the tastes, and sentiments, and characters of the other sex. Here is a trust of very serious magnitude. The moral influence, which by favor of the interest it excites, the female mind, duly enlightened and conscientious, may exert in a community over those whose characters are fixing, and who are presently to have the direction of its affairs, is altogether beyond estimation. Does the task, again, appointed to others, comprehend duties of good neighborhood and charity, and services to the faith of Christ in various forms of good word or work, as opportunity permits or guides, so does the task ap-

pointed to them. That is all an error, which they have sometimes seemed to assume for truth. They have no mark set upon them as incapable and worthless exempts from honorable and happy duty. But, on the contrary, in devotion to it, they become peculiarly efficient and blessed agents of the divine goodness, and they find for themselves the happiness, which, sought in any other path, will prove a phantom, forever flitting before their vision, and eluding their grasp.

It is plain that the remarks, which I have been making, would be irrelevant in the connexion in which I introduced them, if I did not conceive that the leading traits of the character, of which a feeble sketch has been given, were to be recognized in the young person whose recent departure has called forth such an uncommon expression of public feeling, in tokens of cordial respect for her memory, and sympathy with her afflicted friends. If I present an example to the imitation of others similarly circumstanced, as I freely profess to have been doing, it is not in the way of presuming that it may have been faultless. I never knew one which was so,—and if we must wait till we could find such an one, all the benefit of such impulse as example is capable of affording, would be lost. Nor do I undertake to single out this as more complete than others. Far be the arrogance of such a discrimination from me. The belief that there were many such would be a very grateful one. But to cause an example to be produced to the best advantage, it must be conspicuous as well as worthy. It would be to less purpose for me to adduce it, however ex-

cellent and admirable, had it been witnessed only by myself or a few whom I was addressing, leaving the accuracy of the representation to be taken upon trust. But I have felt called upon to present it with distinctness, because it by no means often happens that the character of a young woman, possessing that delicate modesty without which the example would be wanting in a chief grace, is, through favouring circumstances, known and estimated by so many ; and the very interesting event of the first inroad made by death upon the number of those who are carrying on that excellent work of christian usefulness, the management of our Sunday School, demands its own special notice. There are very many volumes which contain much less meaning than the single sentence, which records that a young spirit, after beautifully finishing the work of a daughter, sister, friend, and christian benefactor, has gone to its reward ; and the bright image of the course which has been run, demands to be held up to close and steady view, before, in any memory which recognizes the likeness, time shall have obscured any of its lines.*

We naturally give the name of a mystery to the early removal of one, before whom life seemed all to lie a sunny scene of enjoyment, christian duty, and genuine honor. And certainly the greatest of all mysteries would it be, if, in the providence of him who

* What was written of the sermon ends here. When I was desired by the Society's Committee to print it, my remembrance of the concluding part was imperfect. I have recovered the train of remark as well as I could, making a connexion wherever I could not recollect what had been used.

has all worlds for the sphere of his administration, and all ages for the development of his plans, events did not occur, which refused to reveal their reasons of infinite wisdom and love to us who "are but of yesterday, and know nothing." But upon the else dark paths of God's government, the light of his word, acquainting us with the principles of that government, has been made to shine; and as often as we have observed a happy consequence to follow upon any of the gloomiest of his appointments, we have detected one reason, for which, in his parental goodness, he suffered them to befall. The Father of Spirits "doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men," but "for their profit,"—and the profit, let us add, of all who witness and feel for their grief,—“that they may be partakers of his holiness.” “By the sadness of the countenance, the heart is made better,” and the sadness which is made to overspread many countenances, is meant to sanctify many hearts. “None of us liveth to himself,” and if dispensations, which fill our breasts with sorrow, have at the same time the effect of extensively impressing profitable lessons of truth and duty, then we have found a use for which a good God designed them. “No man dieth to himself.” And when we call to mind that the more important and valued the life which has been closed, and the more unlooked for the fatal blow, the stronger too has been the feeling called forth, and the impression made the more extensive, serious, and improving,—when we perceive, that what we have called the mysterious dealing of the divine Arbiter with one, is capable of such a relation to the best in-

terests of numbers, we can no longer say that we are without a clue to the elucidation of his purposes.

I trust, my hearers, that there are those of us who intend thus far to qualify the meaning, with which we call that under our notice, an inscrutable event. I trust we do not intend to allow the true feeling, which to-day possesses us, to begin and end in fruitless sorrow, or natural sympathy. Children of this society! I should do great violence to my own feelings, as well as appear insensible, which it is impossible that I should be, to the special interest of the occasion, if I did not try to say, in a few friendly words, how affectingly it addresses you. Fifteen years ago, when I came hither, our sister was a little playful child, with a character as much in its element,—at all events, as little tried,—as that of almost any of yourselves;—and now she has gone down in her youth to an honored grave, and the tears which have been rained over that grave, were tears of proud and satisfied affection; and as, from one spring to another, the steps of mourners will turn towards it, their hearts will swell with a grateful blessing to God, that the image, which always dwells freshly there, is the image of a life well devoted to life's best objects. For that it is, and nothing else, which has given so profound an interest to so brief and uneventful a history. That it is, which gave to a life so short, a termination which you have seen to be so lamented;—that it is, which gives to the memory of that life the place of affectionate veneration, which you have found to be held by it in many hearts. The tribute is not to the possession of ad-

vantages, in possessing which, the departed was distinguished from any of you, but simply to christian excellence exhibited in her, which all of you may emulate. She was thus prized, and is thus mourned, because she was a good child ; a good sister ; a good friend, in one sense to those who were privileged by her intimacy, and in another, to all whom she could serve ; and she was all these, because she was a good christian. It was the loveliness of the spirit of the Gospel of Jesus, which shone out in her life, and is a halo around her blessed memory. Because she could say, " I fear the Lord from my youth," therefore it now remains to be said of her, with such a strong conviction of extraordinary appropriateness in the words, that she

"Ne'er knew joy, but friendship might divide,
Nor gave her parents pain, but when she died."

You, too, my young friends, desire to make the happiness of those to whom you are dear while you live, and to leave them consolation when you die, if, in the reversal of what we call the order of nature, they should come to need such a resource. There is one way, in which you can accomplish that wish. It is by walking in that path of religious wisdom, which is for yourselves too, the only path of pleasantness and peace. It is by cultivating that fear of God, which to the youngest is the simple beginning of wisdom, and to the oldest, its consummation and crown, as the truly wise uniformly own.

Parents ! it cannot be but that, reflecting on our relation, we sometimes think of the need, which, in

one or the other form, we must sooner or later experience ; either the need, summoned to resign the objects of our love, of some support under that bereavement, or else,—leaving them ourselves to the chances of the world—of an assurance that their lives, when we are no longer near to guide them, will be worthy and happy lives. That consolation or security, whichever the need may prove, it belongs to us to be even now providing ; and—true in our exertions to the greatness of the object,—we are able, with God’s blessing, richly to provide it. The provision will cost pains, but it will reward them. Rear up our children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,”—teach them in all things to “remember their Creator in the days of their youth,”—and then we shall find availing comforts present with us after the bitter moment when we have closed their eyes, or shall commend them without anxiety to the blessing of him, whom we have served together, in the last prayer which breaks the silence of our own chamber of death.

The young persons of this congregation, who mourn a greatly valued associate, in that excellent office of religious instruction to which I have referred, and others who have sympathized with her in the persuasion, that happiness is to be found in christian duty, true honor in christian usefulness, perceive themselves to be addressed with a peculiarly touching notice of the necessity of that religious preparation for life or death, at which they are aiming ; and they feel with peculiar sensibility the attractiveness of that eminent example of the religious character in

youth, which, lately before them in active and happy life, they are henceforward to contemplate only in respectful memory. Those of you, my friends, who have communed with the departed, in counsels, prayers, and efforts for the building up of Christ's kingdom in those minds of which he himself said, "of such is the kingdom of heaven," grateful, as I am sure you are, for the privileges of that communion, and for those of its influences upon yourselves, which no separation from one another, of those whom it has united, can destroy, will own yourselves to be strongly called on, by this sad proof of the insecurity of earthly hopes, to secure seasonably and amply that better part, which never can be taken away from you. And all, I trust, who have been growing up together here from infancy, till they have come to step upon the threshold of active life, will be prompted to ask themselves the question, whether, while some have, through these all-important years, been walking "in wisdom, redeeming the time," the same is to be said of them; whether the influences, under which the services of this place of their united devotions, combined with other agencies in the providence and grace of God, should have brought them, have been and are in action on their hearts. Has your course, too,—let me be permitted to inquire of each young hearer, whose steps here have been side by side with the departed,—has your course too been such, in these precious years, as to entitle you in some degree, to the testimony of conscience, that you have finished the work given you thus far to do? You have had the same time, which has been so profitably

used. Have you, too, been mindful to employ it well? If so, greatly happy are you in the enjoyment of that reflection. If not, happy are you, that your day and means of grace are not yet withdrawn; and be conjured not to delay an hour to put them to the indispensable uses of repentance for the past, and resolutions of a new life for the future.

Citizens of this community! greatly blessed are you, rich cause have you for gratitude to God, that you live and bring up your children where the sense of the worth of youthful excellence, and the standard of youthful character, are so high; where truly estimable qualities in the young are what above all things attract esteem and consideration, and the loss of one eminently their possessor, is feelingly owned to be a public calamity. Such sentiments are not more honorable to their object, than auspicious to the best good of those who entertain them. Assuredly, my friends, there is no care by which you can more promote the common good, than by endeavours to maintain this sense of character among the young, as far as it is already correct and high, and to advance it to a still further justness and elevation.

——“I have finished the work thou hast given me to do.” Yes! in one sense the work is finished. Morning will rise and evening gather its shadows over that new made grave, but the one will not disturb, and the other will not compose the peaceful sleeper. Evening will no longer send her from the happy fireside to the quiet slumbers of an unburdened conscience. Morning will not call her back to the tasks of filial, sisterly, and Christian love. But how

speaking we of the work of a good life being finished? She of whom we have used the words, now looks back upon what we call death, and knows it to be only, to use the language of a kindred spirit, "an incident in life." Earth has no mounds to confine the soul. The sentence is, that "the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it." The spirit has already gone to higher, more unembarrassed, more intense, more joyful life. The voice, which, on the wings of its soul-harmony, has so often lifted our devotions here to the sphere to which it seemed to belong, is already, we trust, lending its rich and volumed sweetness to swell the anthem of the redeemed. "I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me;—Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. Yea, saith the spirit, for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

A

SERMON

ON THE

NATURE AND INFLUENCE

OF FAITH.

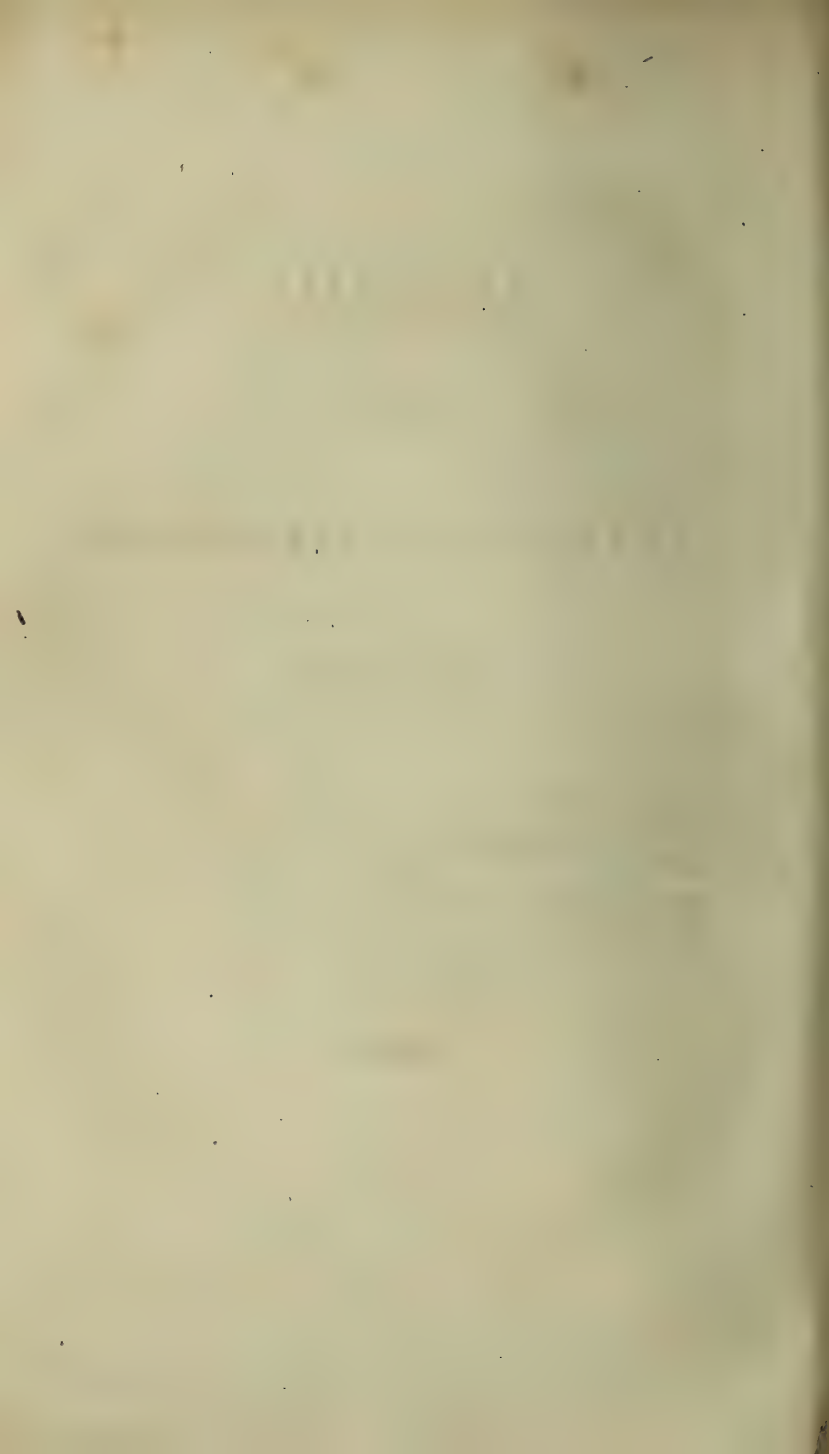
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ANDOVER :

PRINTED BY FLAGG AND GOULD.

1826.



SERMON.



Hebrews xi. 1.

NOW FAITH IS THE SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR, THE
EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN.

ALTHOUGH the nature of faith seems to be very simple and obvious, and the language of the inspired writers respecting it very intelligible ; there is perhaps no subject, which has been more perplexing to the minds of men, or on which they have entertained more obscure and erroneous conceptions. This is indeed a deplorable fact ; and before entering on my principal subject, I wish, as far as I am able, satisfactorily to account for it ; which I shall attempt to do by the following considerations.

1. *The objects of faith are remote from the province of our senses.* Our earliest attention is directed to the present world. We form a habit of looking at the things which are seen. To this habit we are led, as the creatures of sense. When therefore we attempt to get right views of faith, we are under the necessity of casting off the dominion of our early habits ; of counteracting the influence of things temporal ; of breaking away from the enchantments of sense, and turning the current of our thoughts and feelings into a new channel. No person, who has in earnest attempted this, needs to be told with what difficulties it is attended.

2. Another thing, which renders it difficult for us to get clear and operative views of faith, is, *that the language which*

describes it has been so often heard and spoken by us, without any correspondent conceptions or feelings. This custom of speaking or hearing the words of inspiration, and of Christian piety, without the conceptions which those words ought to excite, creates a new difficulty. For whenever that language is repeated, the mind is apt to lie in the same listless state, as formerly. We find it hard to bring ourselves to attend in earnest to a subject, which has often passed before us without exciting attention.

3. It is still more to the purpose to observe, that *such is the nature of faith, that it cannot be rightly apprehended, without being experienced and felt.* Christian faith does not consist chiefly in a speculative discernment of external objects. It is, in a great measure, a matter of *affection*. But how can an *affection* be properly known, except by those who have been the subjects of it? And even as to real believers, faith exists in them in so low a degree, that they are exposed to something of the same difficulty. For how can they form lucid conceptions of that, which operates in their own minds so feebly, that it is hardly visible?—But

4. It is most of all important to observe, that *right apprehensions of faith are prevented, and mistaken apprehensions occasioned, by the prevalence of passions opposed to faith.* The corrupt affections of the heart render us blind to spiritual, holy objects. They not only prevent us from exercising faith, but make us averse to perceive what it is; because such perception would lead to self-reproof and self-condemnation. In this case, it is eminently true, that *the natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit; for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* And just so far as sinful affection prevails in Christians, it hinders spiritual discernment as really, as in the impenitent.

Such causes as these are sufficient to account for the ob-

scure and erroneous views, which are commonly entertained of faith, and for the peculiar difficulty which attends all our efforts to make it well understood.

After these preliminary observations, permit me to call your attention directly to the subject introduced by the text. *Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* I shall avail myself particularly of this text, and of the chapter which contains it, in executing my present design ; which is, *to illustrate the nature and practical influence of faith.*

The brief description here given of faith is this. *It is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* The original word, ὑπόστασις, rendered *substance*, primarily signifies a *pillar* or *basis*, on which any thing is firmly supported, so that it cannot be moved aside or fall. Nearly allied to this is the metaphorical sense ; that is, *firm trust*, or *confidence*, a *certain*, *unshaken hope*, or *expectation*, on which, as a *basis*, the mind *rests* and is *supported*. Faith is as full a persuasion of those things which God has revealed, as can in other things be produced by the evidence of our senses. It gives present *subsistence* and *reality* to the objects of hope.

Faith is also *the evidence of things not seen.* It is, as ἐλεγχος, the original word, signifies, a *proof* or *demonstration* made by *certain evidence*. Or rather, as it is here used, it is the effect produced in the mind by evidence ; *the full persuasion* which results from *the most satisfactory proof*.

You will perceive that the *faith* here spoken of, respects not only the future good, which is made known by the promises of God, and is the proper object of hope, but other invisible things, even things past, which God has in one way or another made known to us. It is remarkable, that the very first instance of faith, here mentioned by the Apostle, relates to *past* events. *Through faith we understand that the worlds were made by the word of God.*

The *foundation* of faith is the *moral perfection of God*, particularly his *veracity*. The understanding of God is infinite; therefore he cannot mistake. God is infinitely holy and good; and therefore he cannot lie. In the exercise of faith, we fix our eye upon a Being of absolute perfection. Whatever such a Being declares, we know must be truth. In this general view, faith seems to have as real a concern with the manifestations which God makes in his *works*, as with the declarations of his *word*. When we observe the works of God in creation and providence, we *believe* that the manifestations he there makes, and the instructions he gives, are *true*. We know that a Being of perfect moral excellence will no more deceive us by the aspect of his countenance, or by the motion of his hand, or by the characters which his finger inscribes on his works, than by the words which he utters.

It is evident that the foundation of *religious* faith is vastly more sure, than human belief in any other instance. Does our belief rest on the opinion or the testimony of *man*? Man may be mistaken, or may deceive. Does it rest on the deductions of *reason*? Those deductions may be fallacious. But *the word of the LORD* is infallible truth; and so it becomes the foundation of the most confident faith.

The foundation of religious faith, I have said, must be *the word of God*. It must be a declaration, for the truth of which the honor of God is pledged. This declaration may, however, be conveyed to us by human testimony. For example; we are informed by John Baptist, and by the Apostles, that God uttered a voice from heaven, saying, *this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*. This declaration is the subject of *religious* faith, because, by means of credible witnesses, we come to know that it was the declaration of God. Having satisfactory evidence that God declared this truth, we believe it on the ground of his *veracity*. In whatever way a declaration of God

is conveyed to us, our faith in it rests ultimately upon his veracity. This would be perfectly obvious, if we should ourselves hear the divine declaration; that is, if the divine declaration should be conveyed to us through the medium of our own senses. And why not, if the same declaration is conveyed to us through the undoubted testimony of others? In both cases, we are first satisfied that God made the declaration. We then believe it with a faith which rests on his veracity. Suppose we become acquainted with a doctrine declared by Socrates, Augustine, or Newton. It is what a *man* declares; a man not divinely inspired; a man, not God. Now do we believe it, because it is declared by such an one? No. We look for other evidence. But looking for other evidence shows, that we have not perfect confidence in him who makes the declaration.

As the word of God, or the veracity of God in his word, is the ultimate ground of religious faith; so the word of God, or divine revelation, is *the rule* of faith. If in any respect whatever we believe differently from the word of God; we depart from the rule, and our faith is, in that respect, erroneous. If we believe less than what God reveals, our faith is defective; if more, it has a faulty redundance. The only way to have our faith right, is to *conform it exactly to the rule of God's word*; taking care, first, to understand the rule correctly, that our faith may not bend to the one side or the other; secondly, to understand it fully, that our faith may not fall short; thirdly, to restrain the lofty aspirings of reason, and the surmises of curiosity, and to be entirely content with the rule, so that our faith may not over-leap its bounds.

Before we touch upon the moral tendency, or the practical influence of faith, it is of material importance to observe, that it implies a *right temper of heart*; in other words, that it implies affections correspondent to the nature of its various objects. It is generally the manner of Scripture expressly to designate the

particular external action, or the action of the understanding, which is required, and that only, upon the reasonable supposition of its being always attended with suitable feelings. Intelligent creatures, possessed, as we are, of a moral nature, must understand, that *moral affection* is to accompany every act of obedience, and that without it, no act of obedience can be acceptable to him, who is the Searcher and Sovereign of the heart. To require the action is, by manifest implication, to require a corresponding state of the heart. And when the action is recorded as having been performed, it is understood that the heart accompanied it. God requires us to *call upon his name*. This, considered literally and simply, is an outward act,—an outward act merely. But this is not the sense in which it is required. It is required, as an expression of the heart; the heart being understood not only to agree with the devout words uttered by the voice, but to prompt those words. So when the Evangelist gives an account of the *great faith* of the centurion, he simply relates his words and external actions. Every body understands, without being expressly informed, that those words and actions were indicative of correspondent feelings. Unless understood in this manner, the narrative amounts to nothing.

The principle I have laid down is obviously applicable to every thing, which is spoken of in Scripture, as a matter of moral obligation; every thing which relates to man, as a moral agent. If the obligation respects him, as a moral agent; then the performance of the duty required includes the action of the whole man, so far as he is of a moral nature. For example; God says to us, “hear my word;” *hear* it. But the duty enjoined is not hearing with the ear merely, the heart being disobedient; but hearing with a right disposition, and right conduct. Again. Christ requires us *to receive* the sacramental bread and wine *in remembrance of him*. But merely the outward act of *receiving* and the exercise of *memory* do not constitute the duty enjoined.

The outward act and the exercise of memory must be accompanied with affections suitable to the nature of what is commemorated. So all Christians understand it. So every thing of the kind must be understood. And while we have conscience and moral affection, and remember that we are under a moral government, we certainly shall so understand it, whether we are expressly told that we must, or not.

I repeat the position, as of primary importance, *that whenever faith is spoken of as a moral virtue, or with regard to its moral influence, we must consider it, as implying affections of heart correspondent to the nature of those objects which it respects.* Such affections must accompany it, and make a part of it, or, in the Scripture sense, it is not faith.

When I say that faith implies affections corresponding with its various objects, it is the same as saying, that faith assumes a *character* according to the nature of its particular objects. If it relates to an object great and awful, it is accompanied with reverence and awe ; if to an object that is amiable, it is accompanied with love ; if to a future or absent good, with desire ; if to something hateful, with abhorrence ; if to something injurious or dreadful, with fear or dread. Thus faith may be said to revere, to love, to desire, to hate, or to dread, just according to the nature of its particular object.

We shall now proceed to consider *the practical influence of faith.* And before we have done, I think it will be apparent, not only that the influence of faith is very great, but that it results directly from the peculiar nature, which has now been represented as belonging to it.

In the word of God we find the most important effects attributed to *faith.* It is represented as having an efficacy, which moves all the springs of action, and controls the whole man. Now a little consideration must satisfy us, that it is perfectly suit-

ed to produce this mighty effect. For, in truth, what is there in the universe, suited to influence the mind or control the actions of man, which does not belong to *faith*. Those things which God has made known in his word, and which are the *objects* of faith, are of the highest conceivable moment. Indeed they have an importance infinitely above our comprehension. God has set before us a great and endless good to be obtained ; a great and endless evil to be avoided. And he has set these before us in all the forms, which are adapted to rouse the affections and the efforts of man. Do any of you say, that the endless good and the endless evil which God has revealed, come not under our observation ; and then ask, how the existence of such things can certainly be known ? My answer is, *Thus saith the Lord*. This is the best of all evidence. Other things may deceive me. But *God cannot lie*. I am sure what *He* says is truth. Or do you say, that the things which God has declared in his word, being *invisible* and *distant*, cannot excite any strong emotion, or any powerful effort ? This, I admit, is true with regard to those who are governed by sense. But it is the very nature of faith to give an uncontrollable efficacy to objects *invisible* and *distant*. All must allow that the things which God has revealed must have a mighty influence upon us, if they were actually *visible* and *present*. To faith they *are* visible. To faith they are *present* too. Faith removes the distance ; and makes them present realities. So that things which are not seen, and things which are to take place thousands of ages hence, excite the same emotions, and have the same practical influence, as though they were actually visible, and actually present. In the exercise of faith, we say of unseen and future things ; they are absolutely certain, because God has declared them. They are equally interesting to us, as if they were present ; for they *will* be present ; and we shall experience them and feel them, when happiness will be as dear to us, and misery

as dreadful, as they are now. They deserve our regard, therefore, just as though they were present. So that, if the glorious excellencies of God, and the employments and pleasures of heaven are sufficient to move the hearts and govern the actions of saints and angels who are now there, they are sufficient to move and govern *us*. If the transactions of the judgment day, if the glorious appearing of the Lord from heaven, the assembling of the universe before him, the disclosure of the secrets of all hearts, the final sentence, the blessedness of the righteous, and the horror and despair of the wicked, will be sufficient to arrest the attention, and touch the feelings, and move all the active powers of those who will be present on that momentous occasion; they are sufficient to arrest *our* attention, to touch our feelings, and move all our powers of action *now*. And just so far as we have faith, they will do it. Men generally look at things which are seen. Sensible objects govern their affections, and limit the sphere of their observation. But faith shifts the scene. As to the grand, governing objects of the human mind, and the motives to action, it puts them in a new world. It spreads a shroud over the things of time and sense, and opens to view things unseen and eternal.

I am now to illustrate the *practical influence* of faith; and this I shall do by bringing into view various instances of it mentioned in the context, and in other parts of Scripture.

Through faith, says the Apostle, *we understand that the worlds were made by the word of God*. It is *through faith*, because we have an *understanding* of it merely by *believing* the testimony of God respecting it, which is contained in the Scriptures.

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. Abel cordially believed what God had said concerning the Seed of the woman. He listened to the appoint-

ment of sacrifices, which were doubtless intended to represent the future atonement. And according to the divine direction, and with correspondent feelings, he offered a sin-offering. Whereupon God gave him a testimony, that his offering was accepted. Cain's offering was faulty, because he wanted *faith*; i. e. because he did not cordially believe the promise of God, nor render sincere obedience to his appointment.

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death. Enoch walked with God. He was habitually sensible of his presence, confided in his promise, and looked at eternal things. Such was the operation of his *faith*. God rewarded his faith by taking him immediately to heaven, without his seeing death. Thus he obtained his translation *by faith*.

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark. Here the nature of faith begins to appear still more clearly. God said, *the end of all flesh is come; behold I will destroy them with the earth*. He then gave command to Noah to make an ark. Though the destruction of the world by a deluge was a thing which no one had ever seen or heard of before; Noah cordially believed that word of God which asserted it. In his view, God's saying it made it a certainty. He had no more doubt of it, than he had after it had rained forty days and forty nights. Thus he prepared an ark *by faith*, or in consequence of *faith*; that is, in consequence of his *confidently believing* what God had declared. Had he not believed the declaration of God, he would not have done this.

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. God commanded Abraham to go out of his country unto another land, and promised to make of him a great nation. Abraham had perfect confidence in God, and so looked upon the thing which he promis-

ed, as absolutely certain. This perfectly accounts for his leaving his kindred, and going out he knew not whither. Simple, childlike faith in God was the principle of his conduct.

The writer, v. 17, clearly exhibits his idea of faith with respect to those servants of God whom he had just mentioned. *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, (that is, the good things contained in the promises,) but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them.* God had at different times, promised them everlasting blessings in the world to come. These promises they fully believed, and confidently expected the blessings promised. They anticipated those blessings with so strong a desire, and so lively a persuasion of their reality, that they may be said to have already embraced them, and begun to enjoy them. Now all this excitement of their feelings, and the conduct which flowed from it, was the effect of their cordially believing the promises of God, and with perfect assurance expecting their accomplishment.

The nature and influence of faith appeared eminently in the conduct of Abraham respecting Isaac. God had promised that in Isaac his seed should be called, and all the families of the earth blessed. On *Isaac* every thing seemed to depend. If *Isaac* should die, what would become of the divine promises? What would become of the calling of Abraham's seed, and the blessing which was to come upon all nations? Yet Abraham had such a belief, so lively and certain a persuasion, that God was true, and would accomplish his word, that he hesitated not, when commanded, to sacrifice his son Isaac. Why was not Abraham agitated and perplexed with the difficulties, which attended that distressing affair? Why was he not pressed with the various objections which might be urged against the sacrifice of Isaac? Simply, because he had *faith*. Faith in God answered all objections; relieved all difficulties. It was enough for Abraham, that God had promised. But how would it be

possible for God to fulfil his promise, if Isaac should be slain? With such a question as this, Abraham gave himself no concern. He knew that God had an unfailing resource in himself; that he could do any thing which the case required; that he could, if necessary, even *raise Isaac from the dead*; though the idea of a resurrection from the dead was probably a suggestion of Abraham's strong faith, as no such event had ever taken place. Thus the main-spring of action in this whole affair, was that faith, which is a full confidence in the word of God, and a certain, lively expectation that it will be accomplished, whatever difficulties may stand in the way.

Joseph, at the close of his life, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and commanded that his bones should be carried with them into Canaan, *by faith*; that is, because he believed the promise of God respecting the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, and looked upon that departure, as a reality, a matter of fact,—just as we do now.

We have an account too of the faith of Moses. He believed the promises of God respecting the deliverance of the Israelites, and the everlasting blessings to be conferred on the faithful in another world. He chose, therefore, to have his lot with his suffering brethren, how much soever it might cost him. The good, which the sure promise of God led him to expect, was, he well knew, infinitely better than all the treasures of Egypt, and infinitely more than an overbalance for all the sufferings to which he might be exposed. He endured as seeing the invisible God, from whom he expected support and deliverance.

At the close of this interesting account, the inspired writer gives a summary description of the efficacy of faith in various other instances, in the following sublime and moving strain.

“What shall I say more? For the time would fail me to tell

of Gideon and Barak, and Samson, and Jephthah, and David, and Samuel, and the prophets ; who *through faith*," that is, *animated and borne on by unwavering confidence in God*, "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, put to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead, raised to life again ; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword ; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented." What the servants of God did and suffered in all these cases was, *by faith*. They believed the word of God. They were sensible of his presence. They sought and expected the blessings he had promised. They acted with a view to those blessings, and by anticipation lived upon them. God's everlasting kingdom contained a blessedness so great and precious, that it roused all their desires, and all their efforts ; and in pursuit of it hardships and sufferings became light, and the most painful enterprises easy and delightful. Such was the power of faith.

The chapter to which we have now attended contains, as we have seen, a particular description of the influence of faith,—a description which is very intelligible and impressive, and which can hardly fail to satisfy any attentive reader, as to the exact view which the writer entertained of his subject.

But to cast a still clearer light on this subject, and to illustrate the perfect agreement of the inspired writers respecting it, I shall show that faith, in other prominent instances, must be considered as having the same nature, and that its influence is to be accounted for in the same manner.

2 Cor. 5: 7. *For we walk by faith, not by sight.* Faith is here represented as the essential principle of the Christian life. And what this faith is, we readily learn from the connexion. *We walk,—not by sight.* That is, we are not influenced in our conduct by a regard to the things which are seen. But *we walk by faith ; we look at the things which are not seen ;* we are influenced by a regard to spiritual, eternal objects. And how are those unseen, spiritual objects made known, but by *the word of God ?* And how do we look at them, or regard them, so as to be influenced by them, but by *faith ;* that is, by cordially believing the word of God ?

James 1: 6. *But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.* The faith to be exercised in prayer, is here put in opposition to a doubtful, wavering mind, and so must imply a cordial, settled belief in the doctrines and promises of God's word.

In Acts 15 : 9, Peter represents, that God purified the hearts of Gentile converts, *by faith ;* that is, by a steady, cordial belief in the truths of the Gospel ; or which is the same thing, by a steady, cordial regard to those invisible, spiritual things, which the word of God reveals.

Some men appear to think that there is something in *evangelical faith*, or *faith in Christ*, essentially different from other kinds of faith ; and that the account, which I have given of the nature and influence of faith generally, cannot be received as in any measure satisfactory in relation to this particular instance of it. How far such an opinion has any adequate support, a careful attention to the subject will quickly show.

Faith I have represented to be a firm, cordial belief in the veracity of God, in all the declarations of his word ; or, a full and affectionate confidence in the certainty of those things which God has declared, and because he has declared them. Whatever may be the divine testimony, and to whatever object it may relate, faith receives it, and rests upon it. This is its gen-

eral nature. That most important branch of faith, called *Evangelical faith*, differs from other instances of faith only in regard to object. The testimony of God, which evangelical faith receives, respects the SAVIOUR. If then you would know what faith in Christ is, in distinction from other exercises of faith; inquire, what is the testimony of God concerning his Son? What does the Scripture say of his character, his works, his instructions, his atonement, his various offices and blessings? This testimony respecting Christ is just what faith receives. Determine precisely what this testimony is, and you determine the peculiar character of evangelical faith.

And here we shall readily see how it comes to pass that faith in Christ so often has the sense of *affectionate trust*, or *affiance*? The object, which the word of God, in this case reveals, and which evangelical faith respects, is obviously, and in the highest degree, worthy of such trust. He is infinitely wise, benevolent, and powerful, and therefore deserves to be trusted by all intelligent beings. He is a glorious, all-sufficient SAVIOUR, and therefore deserves to be trusted in by sinners. Cordial affiancement, or trust, is the very disposition in us, which is agreeable to the character and offices of Christ. To admit that there is such a Saviour, and yet to repose no affectionate trust in him, would be a shocking and most criminal inconsistency. Accordingly, this affectionate trust, which always accompanies faith when such is its object, becomes frequently the principal thing signified by the word.

By this principle, you may easily trace out the particular senses, in which the word, *faith*, is used in various other passages of Scripture. First, see what is the nature of the object, to which faith has respect in the particular case to be considered. Then see what is the temper of mind with which we ought to contemplate that object; or what is the effect it ought to produce upon us. That temper of mind, that proper effect of faith

may become the chief thing intended by the writer who uses the word. In some passages, for example, faith is obviously used, as Schleusner and others remark, for *conversion to Christianity*; because such conversion is *the proper consequence of believing the truths of the Gospel*; whereas if a man should believe those truths, and yet not turn from his sins, he would be guilty of doing violence to his own reason. In other places, faith seems to denote *obedience*; manifestly, because faith respects Christ, as a righteous Lawgiver and Ruler, and so directly leads to obedience; and a man who should believe Christ to be such a Lawgiver and Ruler, and yet should not obey him, would act most inconsistently and perversely.

The practical results of the view which has now been taken of the nature and influence of faith, and *the reflections* arising from it, are so numerous and important, that I shall feel it necessary to give them greater prominence and extent than is usual.

1. We are led to reflect on the general character of *false faith*. False faith always misapprehends, in a greater or less degree, the meaning of the divine testimony. This is *one* of its chief faults. The other is, that even where, as to speculation, it correctly understands the divine testimony, it is wanting in right feeling.

There is one particular kind of faith, which has had no small credit in some parts of the Christian world, but which we can easily prove to be unscriptural and false, by the principles established in the foregoing discussion. In the exercise of that kind of faith to which I now refer, a man believes, without regard to his character, that Christ died for him in particular, and has forgiven, or certainly will forgive his sins. Consider now, that true faith always looks to the divine testimony, and is conformed to it. In this case, then, the first question is, what is the testimony of God respecting those who are pardoned, and

to whom the blessings of Christ's death are promised? The answer is at hand. *Repent and believe, that your sins may be blotted out. He that believeth on the Son, hath life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* But under the influence of that faith, which I would now expose, a man believes, without any evidence of piety, that God has forgiven his sins, and made him an heir of heaven. He has not repented; has not been born again; is without holiness. Still he believes his sins are forgiven, and his name written in heaven. But in believing this, he *disbelieves* the divine testimony. The Scripture declares, that no man of such a character is pardoned. He believes that he is pardoned, because he does not believe the word of God.

We have here, then, a general test of faith. It is not our business to inquire, whether any man's faith is agreeable to this or that system of opinions, to such a deduction of reason, or to such a dream of fancy. Our simple inquiry is, whether it is agreeable to the word of God; whether, as to apprehension and feeling, it is an exact counterpart to the divine testimony.

2. It is easy to see *what influence Christian faith must have in forming our religious opinions.* A man of faith regulates his opinions by the only rule of faith, *the word of God.* Whatever may be the subject of investigation, he seeks to know what God the Lord will say. Whether the doctrines of Scripture are agreeable to his previous views, or not; whether comprehensible, or incomprehensible, is not his question at all. When he finds what God says, his inquiry ends; his opinions are fixed. But a man wanting in Christian faith is not satisfied with this. He may indeed perceive what God says; but he must look further. One says; how can this be? It is so inconsistent with reason, so different from every thing which nature and philosophy teach, that I must regard it as utterly incredible. Another

asks, whether the doctrine in question would be agreeable to his particular party. The object of inquiry with a third is, whether the doctrine proposed would require him to deny any of his inclinations, or to forego any of his honors or pleasures. In despite of the clearest evidence from the word of God, they govern their opinions by just such considerations as these. And all this, because they have not *faith*. What wonder is it then, that men, destitute of faith, should be carried about with every wind of doctrine, and embrace opinions as distant as possible from the decisions of holy writ.

We see also, that Christians are likely to agree in their religious opinions, in proportion to the activity and strength of their faith. The testimony of God is one. The rule of their opinions is one. If their faith is active in searching after the testimony of God, and strong to receive it, whatever it may be, they are surely in the way to union.

My *third* reflection is, *that Christian faith is suited at once to humble man, and to glorify God.* First; it *humbles man*., The divine testimony, which it receives, rises far above the reach of our understanding, and by its sacred and incomprehensible doctrines, is suited to bring down the pride of reason. Again; the divine testimony represents man to be exceedingly guilty, vile, and helpless. When we believe that testimony, we believe ourselves to be just so guilty, vile, and helpless. Thus we are laid low, and made to feel that shame and blushing belong to us.

But the same faith that humbles man, *exalts and glorifies God.* The Apostle says, Rom. 4 : 20, 21. *that Abraham staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.* The promise, as you will recollect, was one which seemed impossible to be performed. But Abraham readily believed it, and anticipated the performance of it as a certainty. He was as fully

persuaded of it, as though it had already taken place. All this he believed, purely because God had promised it. Now this persuasion of Abraham's mind was highly honorable to God. Whenever we believe any thing on the authority of God's word, we honor him, as a God of truth. This is eminently the case when the accomplishment of God's word is attended with peculiar difficulties, so that our believing it can arise from no cause, but our confidence in the divine veracity and power. Again ; Abraham saw the land of Canaan in the possession of a ferocious and powerful people. Yet because he had confidence in God, he believed that the land would be given to his children for an inheritance. Isaac and Jacob believed the same, though to human reason nothing could appear more improbable. The faith of Christians honors God in the same way. They know the greatness of their guilt, the penalty of the law, the justice of God. And yet they believe, purely on the authority of God's word, that they may be pardoned. They know the deceit, the hardness, the obstinacy of their hearts ; and yet they have such confidence in God, that they are persuaded he can heal these spiritual maladies, and make them holy. They have such an apprehension of the love, the power, and the faithfulness of God, that they confidently believe, because he hath said it, that all nations, how deplorable soever their present condition, shall be given to Christ for an inheritance ; that idolatry, and superstition, and every form of sin and misery shall be banished from the world ; that kings, and rulers, and all people shall bow to the King of Zion, and the knowledge of the Lord fill the earth. However difficult the work which God promises to perform ; however diverse from any thing they ever knew in other cases ; they have such honorable apprehensions of God, that they believe it will certainly be accomplished. Thus, in the exercise of faith, they show their high estimation of the glorious character of God ; and this most of all, when they themselves

are in straits ; when they can see nothing but darkness and danger, and when, so far as human power can go, their case is hopeless. To repose trust in God in such circumstances ; to look to him for support, direction and deliverance, when all other help fails, shows what exalted thoughts they entertain of his infinite perfections.

4. It is obvious that *all the defects of our character and conduct are owing to the want, or the weakness of faith.*

Without faith in the general sense, man has in fact no motives to a holy life ; because all the motives to holiness are found in those invisible things which are the objects of faith, and which are brought by faith to have an influence on the mind. Were there no God, no moral government, no law with divine sanctions, no eternal retribution, there would be no motives to holiness, and of course no holiness. And if a man does not cordially *believe* in a moral law and government, and a future retribution, it will be to him just as though there were none. In other words, there will be nothing, there can be nothing, which will have any influence upon him, as a motive to holy action. It is clear then that faith, in this view, is indispensable to the exercise of holiness. But not to dwell upon this general view of faith ; we know that the Scriptures in various places represent the want or weakness of *Christian faith*, as the cause of what is faulty in the character and conduct of men, and of Christians, as well as others.

Suffer me then, brethren, to use freedom of speech on this subject, and to say, that one of the prominent faults in our character is *a worldly spirit*. Do we not set our affections on earthly friends, relations, riches, honors, and enjoyments ? Does not a regard to these govern our conduct ? Do not the zeal and diligence we show in our pursuits spring chiefly from this source ? See here the consequence of the want of faith.—*This is the victory which overcometh the world*, says an Apostle,

even our faith. If we had faith ; that is, if we cordially and steadily believed what the Scriptures teach ; if we had an abiding, lively sense of the glory of God, the excellence of his law and government, our guilty, and wretched state, the beauty and all-sufficiency of Christ, the endless joys of heaven and the endless sufferings of hell ; if these objects were continually present to our view, and our understandings and hearts were filled with them ; the things of this dying world would all sink into nothing. No earthly pleasures could allure us. None of the honors or riches of the world could excite our desire. Upon them all we should see the broad stamp of vanity and insignificance, and a worldly spirit would die away.

Again. Are we not frequently conscious of *a reluctance to forsake all for Christ* ? He has told us that, if we will do this, *we shall have an hundred fold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting.* Why are we so reluctant ? Why go away from him, as the young man in the gospel did, with heaviness of heart ? It is our *unbelief*, brethren. We are not cordially persuaded of the truth and importance of what Christ declares. The good which he promises we regard not as a precious reality. We do not look upon it with feelings correspondent to its nature and worth. Had we strong, lively faith in the promises of Christ ; there is no present advantage we should not freely relinquish, and no suffering we should not cheerfully undergo, for the sake of that eternal inheritance which he has promised to the faithful.

Are we not conscious of a lamentable degree of *insensibility* and *sloth* in the concerns of religion ? And how is this to be accounted for ? Are not the eternal objects made known by the word of God, of sufficient importance to rouse our attention ? Is not the favour of him who made us, and of him who died for us, and the enjoyment of his everlasting kingdom, worthy of being sought with diligence ? Is not an eternity of insupport-

able suffering dreadful enough to excite our most watchful care to avoid it? Yes, brethren. But our *unbelief* makes all these appear distant and uncertain. It takes away from things eternal their power to interest the heart, and to produce emotion and effort, and leaves us as supine and dormant, as though the glorious objects of religion had no existence.

'Tis unbelief also, that renders us so *indifferent to the salvation of sinners, and the prosperity of the church*. Did we see eternal things in the light of divine truth, and apprehend, in any suitable measure, their importance, their certainty, and their nearness; what a lively sensibility should we have to the interests of our connexions, and friends, and all our fellow men. What concern for immortal souls, ready to perish. What strong desire for their redemption from sin and death. How alive should we be to every thing which stands connected with the prosperity of the church, and the interests of eternity.

It is the want of a lively faith in the great things of the unseen world, that renders us so *superficial and heartless in our devotions*. If in our seasons of secret and social worship, we should have *faith*; if we should look into eternity; should see just before us the resurrection of the dead, the judgment seat, and all the generations of men assembled to receive their irreversible doom; could we be dull and wandering in our prayers? If we knew that all these things were shortly to burst upon our view; would earthly trifles be suffered to break in upon our devotions? Would not all the ardor of our souls be kindled up in our addresses to our God and our Judge?

To this same source we are to trace all the follies and sins apparent in our lives. If the eye of our faith were always open and always fixed on the certain, tremendous, glorious things of another world; if, wherever we went and whatever we did, these eternal objects were present to our view, and had full possession of our feelings; every irregular passion would lose its

power, and we should become circumspect and holy in all our conduct.

And is it indeed so, my brethren, that our earthly mindedness, our reluctance to forsake all for Christ, our insensibility and sloth in religion, our indifference in regard to the prosperity of the church and the salvation of sinners, our dull and heartless devotions, and all the irregularities of our temper and conduct are owing to the want of a steady, strong, lively faith? Of what vast importance is it, then, that we should possess such a faith; and of course, that we should diligently employ those means which are suited to promote it.

Here indulge me a few moments, while I say, that the principal means of promoting a strong, lively faith, is the *exercise* of it. It results from the constitution of the mind, that all our affections and habits are strengthened by exercise. Every time, therefore, that we view eternal things in the light of revelation; every time we look at them with a full persuasion of their certainty, and a suitable sense of their importance; we do something towards promoting a strong, steady faith. This salutary influence of exercising faith is not however in all cases equal in degree, but will be very much according to circumstances; and particularly will it be in proportion to the *difficulty* which attends such an exercise. A single instance of faith, in circumstances like those in which Abraham confidently believed the promise of God, will go farther towards establishing a living principle of faith in the mind, than many acts of faith, where no difficulty is encountered. In such a case as that of Abraham, there is a struggle, a contest. Obstacles are met and removed; enemies are subdued; and the power of faith is established. Take care, then, brethren, when difficulties multiply; when dark clouds are spread over you; when sense and reason are nonplussed, and you have nothing in heaven or earth to rest upon, but the simple word of God; in such cases, take care to

have faith, strong faith. Go forth at the divine word, leaving all, and not knowing whither you go. Sacrifice your Isaacs. March right forward into the sea ; and, if God command, dip your feet in the waters, and wade, and swim, and buffet the waves, believing that God Almighty will help you through.

I have only one more remark ; namely ; that clear views and deep impressions of divine things, and powerful movings of affection towards them, or, which is the same thing, strong, animated exercises of faith, will do vastly more towards a habit of faith, than other exercises which are comparatively feeble and lifeless. You may exercise a weak, unanimated faith many years, and not do so much towards giving the mind the character of steady, unyielding faith, as may be done in an hour or a minute, in which eternal things come with clearness to the soul, waking up all its powers, and exciting acts of vigorous, undivided, unwavering faith. Such acts of faith have an abiding influence. They produce a permanent character. Something as our being transported into the third heaven, and seeing and hearing what Paul saw and heard, would produce an impression on our minds that would remain through life, and show its effects through eternity.

Let us then be sensible how vastly important it is, that divine, eternal things should take deep hold on our minds ; should excite strong emotions ; should rouse all our powers to action ; should fill our capacities, and exhaust the energies of our souls. And let us seize every occasion and apply ourselves to every means, favorable to such a state of mind. By retirement ; by watchful care not to be engrossed with earthly pursuits ; by devoutly reading the Scriptures ; by heavenly contemplation ; by mortifying all sinful affection ; by spiritual converse with divine and eternal objects, and by ardent, incessant desires and prayers after them, let us endeavour to get away from the delusion of sensible things ; to rise above the present world, and

to bring our understandings and hearts under the influence of divine truth ; deeming ourselves happy, when favored with a few moments of clear, spiritual knowledge, and strong faith ; and then advancing from moments to hours, and from hours to days, till we come to look with an undiverted eye at things not seen and eternal, and from morning to night, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, have our feelings and actions all swayed by faith in God. Oh ! blessed attainment ! When shall we rise to any thing like this ? *LORD, increase our faith.*

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THE PULPIT AND THE STATE:

A DISCOURSE,

PREACHED ON SUNDAY, FEB. 15, 1863,

BY

REV. WILLARD SPAULDING,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY IN SALEM.

PUBLISHED BY
CHARLES A. BECKFORD,
No. 9 Central Street, Salem.

PRINTED BY REQUEST OF THE PROPRIETORS.

SALEM:

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THE PULPIT AND THE STATE.



“Righteousness exalteth a nation ; but Sin is a reproach to any people.”—*Prov.* xiv, 34.

The voice of inspiration teaches us that Government is of divine origin. The necessity for it, doubtless, is found in our very nature. One form may have no higher sanction than another, but a government of some kind must exist. Man may engage in the erection of the structure, but it is not strictly a human creation, since he is forced to the accomplishment of the work. Laws may be changed by human influence ; they may be, justly or unjustly, broken by revolution ; but law itself cannot be annihilated. “The powers that be are ordained of God.”

All the civil organizations of the world profess to be grounded upon divine principles. They claim to rest on no false or arbitrary basis, but on the eternal laws of right, which proceed from the mouth of God. As His work, they acknowledge allegiance to Him. He is “King of kings and Lord of lords,” since it is his right to rule whatever he has formed. The magistrate and the subject alike act under the solemn influence of an oath, registered in heaven. Their supplications ascend together to the Deity, from whom is all their support. The State is no less dependent upon Him, than the individuals of whom it is composed ; and it is, equally with them, subject to His decrees.

All governments acknowledge the existence of a religious element in man, and that provision for its development has been divinely made. They admit that it is the most important part of his being, and that the religion he accepts is paramount to all other forces operating upon him. No State can stand on the principles of Infidelity. Let it deny the existence of Deity, make morality conventional, teach the doctrine that might constitutes right, and remove the grounds of hope, and its days will quickly be numbered. Let it remember only that its subjects are physical and mental beings, and they will shortly crush it beneath their feet. There must be Rituals, or there can be no Civil Service. There must be Altars, or there can be no Magistrates. No government in the Christian world could stand a day without an acknowledgment of the Gospel;—no treasure would be given for its support, no arms would be stretched out in its defence. If it were not so, public opinion would be found mightier than the sword, and ideas more than a match for hissing bullets. The word of God cannot be overcome. It is, therefore, the highest wisdom in the State to encourage its promulgation. Its own safety depends upon its acceptance.

It is not difficult to perceive how Civil Organizations are influenced by Religion. It is, doubtless, its first office to mould the individual character. We derive from it the spirit by which we are animated. Outward circumstances, though not unimportant, have comparatively little influence upon us. Mental culture, which is indeed desirable, is far less potent. It is Religious Education which forms the individual mind. Every human body must partake of the character of the elements of which it is composed. In material things, the result of combinations may be totally unlike the combining elements, but it is not so in the human world. The State is like its constituent parts. Demoralize its mem-

bers, weaken their sense of right, inspire them with selfishness, and inflame their passions, and it will soon crumble to ruin. Nothing but adversity can come upon it. You have opened the fountains of evil, and the deluge is at hand.

But it will be otherwise with the State, when those who compose it accept the principles of true religion. When they become loyal to Truth and Justice; when the spirit of Equality pervades their hearts, and they are bound together by the ties of Fraternal Sympathy; when they become animated with every Christian virtue, then will the State have before it a glorious career of prosperity. It will advance in all the elements of material wealth, for God has promised this blessing to those that do his will. The energies of the civil body now become irresistible, for the arm of Righteousness is indeed omnipotent. The mind of the nation is rapidly developed, and large additions are made to the intellectual treasures of the world. No limit is set to the existence of such a body, for it is as true of States as of men, that the righteous shall live forever. Every State that dies, perishes by a suicidal hand. Under the benign influence of our holy religion, a more glorious commonwealth shall arise than the world has ever known. The pages of history yet to be written, will be brighter than those which are already penned.

The Civil History of the world truly reflects its Religious Progress. If we find but little to admire in the nations of antiquity, it is because they were founded in heathenism. In this school the Sovereign was educated, and, unless preserved by a special providence, he came forth a tyrant. He learned therein, not that he was made for the State, but that it was made for him. Deceptive, cruel and exacting, he was ever an object of fear. Here and there we find a monarch, the history of whose reign is not written in letters of blood,

but they are exceptions to the general rule. The subject was no better than the sovereign. Weak, superstitious and debased, he readily accepted the yoke prepared for him. We should naturally expect that nations composed of such material, would have a miserable existence, and come to an inglorious end. They were smitten with the plague of Idolatry, from which there is no recovery. When the Jews forgot Jehovah, the rod of destruction was laid upon them; and every nation committing the same offence must endure a similar judgment.

The Moslem faith was based on deception, its author claiming for it a divine origin, when he knew it was from beneath. There were in it jewels of truth, but they were all purloined, and were rendered of little value by the setting they received. Conscious of its inherent weakness, its advocates resorted to the sword for its promulgation. They knew there was no safety for it, except in the destruction of all opposing systems. It became at once a State religion, and its influence thoroughly pervaded the civil body. Treachery has, perhaps, been the leading characteristic of every Mohammedan government. Imbecility and a tendency to disorganization are every where apparent. The elements of steady and continued progress are entirely wanting. This religion has appropriated the fairest and most favored regions of the earth, only to cast upon them the shadow of death. Heathenism itself presents a higher civilization. Though inconsistent with enlightened reason, it is yet no counterfeit, and the State resting upon it has a better basis. We are not surprised that the question is raised, whether governments founded on the Koran should be longer tolerated in the world.

Christianity affords the only sufficient foundation for the State. A new light dawned upon the nations on its in-

troductioſ into the world. The Chriſtian Government, next to the Chriſtian Church, is the moſt glorious ſtructure we are permitted to behold. Under its benign influence, the civil inſtitutions of men were deſtined to attain to a high degree of perfection. It was to undo the pernicious work which wrong ſystems of belief had accompliſhed. It contains a perfect code of morals, ſo ſimple that all may comprehend it, and ſo beautiful as to inſpire admiration in every heart. It enlightens conſcience with heavenly wiſdom, and quickens it with divine life. It dignifies man in his own eſtimation, by opening to his viſion the gates of immortal being, and thus elevates the plane of his preſent life. It teaches him to manifeſt, in every character he may be called to ſuſtain, the virtues with which it ſeeks to imbue his ſoul. It bids him remember the grandeur of his being, and his reſponſibility to his God, in every organization in which he may be ſummoned to act. It is, therefore, fitted alike for the Ruler and Subject, teaching the former that he ſhould be a “miniſter of God for good,” and the latter that he ſhould “do that which is good,” being “ſubject, not only for wrath, but alſo for conſcience ſake.” The Chriſtian monarch, whatever may be brought againſt the ſystem by which he rules, can never become a tyrant. He will exerciſe his authority in a paternal ſpirit. Only a Chriſtian People can be fitted for Self-Government. The Goſpel alone can give true freedom, and ſtrengthen us for its preſervation. Inſtructed by it, we underſtand the miſſion of government, and become qualified to diſcharge the duties of the citizen. Through its influence the State becomes the harmonious counterpart of the Church.

The firſt governments which bore the Chriſtian name, were doubtleſs but little better than thoſe which immedi-

ately preceded them. They were oppressive, and not worthy to endure. The leaven of Christian truth had begun to operate upon them, but the work of regeneration could not be completed in a day. Long periods of time would be required for its accomplishment. The Gospel was given and established by miracle, but it was not in this manner to be continuously promulgated. Its triumphs were to be gradually achieved, in accordance with the laws of our being. Efforts were made, which were but too successful, to engraft upon it the erroneous systems of belief which had been previously entertained; and for centuries the so called Christian world might, with greater propriety, have been termed heathen. The corruptions of the new system were manifest, not only in the condition of the Church, but also in that of the State—both magistrates and subjects being disqualified for their duties. The hand that kindled a strange fire upon the Christian altar, wrote a heathen statute for the government of the people. We should be careful not to charge to our religion, the works which have been wrought out by its false apostles.

When the light of the Reformation dawned upon the world, the State was benefitted by it equally with the Church. The minds of men were enfranchised—left free to appropriate all the truth lying within their grasp. They were elevated to a perception and realization of their rights. Their energies were aroused, so that things before regarded as impossible, became certain of accomplishment. Despondency gave way to hope, although they were endued with the spirit of sacrifice, and ever ready for martyrdom. When men are educated to discern their Religious rights, they become qualified to judge of those which are Political in their character; and the same forces which rend the bands of superstition, will soon break the fetters of civil bondage. The liberties enjoyed in western Europe are

clearly traceable to the Reformation. The monarchies which there exist are limited by public opinion, and by statutes which the people have authoritatively demanded of their rulers. They would take no denial, and the swords drawn against them were compelled to return to their scabbards. Luther, while addressing the Pope, was listened to with fear by all the tyrants of the world, who heard in his burning words their own sentence of doom. His disciples were not only the Apostles of the Church, but the Patriots of the Realm. The pen with which he wrote his Exegesis of the Bible, was to be employed in tracing out Constitutions for the People. Those who, under his valiant leadership, assailed the Pope, were afterward to dethrone kings. He began the work of exterminating all systems of oppression, and left it to his followers for completion.

Eminent in this pioneer labor were the Puritan Fathers, who prosecuted the work with persistent energy. Though their hands were not entirely clean, yet they dealt heavy blows against tyrants in surplices and in royal robes. They were eminently a *thinking* people, and, though by no means free from fanaticism, followed in the main the way of wisdom. No obstacles could dishearten them; their zeal increased with every trial; they were terribly in earnest, for they were ready to yield up their possessions and their lives, rather than abandon their honest convictions. They asked nothing as citizens, but everything as followers of Christ. They were never Politicians, but always Religionists. They bore this character not only in the Church, but also in the Parliament, and on the Battle Field. They fought the most valiantly as they prayed the most fervently. In this character they felt themselves the equals of lords and sovereigns, not believing that any one had a right to oppress the heritage of God.

The highest type of Puritanism in England was produced in Cromwell, and its best work in the Commonwealth, though it endured but for a season. Sagacious, firm and patriotic, with perfect faith in the Word of God, which he sought to take as his guide, he labored to rid his country of a burden, which, unfortunately, she chose longer to wear. He shed the blood of royalty; and though the throne remained, he hung over it an avenging sword, to teach every new occupant that there is a point of forbearance beyond which the people will not go. The people of England owe to Puritanism, as the highest interpretation of the Gospel, the liberties they now enjoy.

To the same source is the American nation indebted for its free institutions. The Faith of our Fathers, which was strengthened and made more precious to them by the trials through which they had passed, brought them to this almost wilderness land, and out of it has arisen the government which secures to us the enjoyment of our civil and religious rights. If this government is more perfect than any other which has ever been framed, it is because that FAITH had more divine truth in it than was contained in any creed which had ever been accepted among men. Our fathers saw, in the light which it shed upon their vision, the "Inalienable Rights" with which the Creator had endowed them. It inspired them with the deepest hatred of oppression. It imparted to them, in its fullest measure, the spirit of self-sacrifice. It gave to them, along with the most undaunted heroism, energies which could not be resisted. Finding in the Gospel a charter of human rights, they resolved on its preservation, though they might be called, in the prosecution of the work, to dwell in barren wilds and wade through bloody seas. They produced the Declaration of Independence, as the correct political exegesis of the New Testa-

ment. Others had sought in that book the "divine right of kings;" they found in it THE DIVINE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE. The doctrine of Human Fraternity, which is one of its fundamental principles, had, in their view, an application to the State. Accepting this principle, they went on to the assertion of the essential equality of men, and of their common rights. The Revolution was a religious war; those who fell in it were Christian martyrs. The instrument of government which followed it, was the work of consecrated hands. We do not err when we say that the American Commonwealth is a divine creation. It was wrought out through the instrumentality of human hands, but the guiding influence and the moving power were from on high. It is founded on the Word of God, which has exalted it above all other nations.

We have seen that the State is of divine appointment; that it is professedly based on religious principles; that, in the very nature of things, it must be powerfully influenced thereby—the civil history of the world being little more than the record of their operation. It follows that the Pulpit, as the chief exponent of divine truth, owes to the State the most important duties. It may contribute greatly to its prosperity and glory, or, by its neglect, hasten it to ruin. Its general labors, if faithfully performed, will tend to secure the former result; but specific efforts should be put forth to that end. Its sphere is surely not political, but it by no means follows that it must forget the government in its prayers and instructions; for the State is more than a political body. It speaks to men as laborers, as parents, as neighbors—why should it not address them as citizens? Caucuses and Elections, Platforms and Parties, Congresses, Judges and Presidents, come legitimately within its notice.

It must, of course, discuss these themes in their *moral* bearings. No feeling of timidity, no time-serving policy, should prevent its accomplishment of this work. While it seeks the salvation of individual hearts, let it labor with equal energy and directness to save the nation from moral death. Let it carry the revival of the Church into the State, before it has sinned away the day of grace.

The sphere which some have marked out for the Pulpit is altogether too narrow. There is infinitely more danger that it will not fill up its proper boundaries, than that it will pass beyond them. Indeed, those pulpits which are regarded by many as the most religious, preach the least of practical Christianity. Most of their productions have no conceivable application to life. They tend rather to blind the minds of men to the world, than to open before them their duties, and lead them to take up the burdens which Providence calls them to bear. Formerly the Pulpit was not allowed the light of Science, and hence many of its utterances have been found contradictory to the facts of nature. It is still, to no inconsiderable extent, denied the aid of Philosophy, and hence the absurdities of the creed-book are without number. The whole man should speak, and not a single faculty, rendered inefficient by separation from the other powers; and all nature, and every department of human life, should furnish themes for discourse.

The Bible, we admit, is not a political treatise; yet, how much of the Old Testament was addressed to the Jews as a nation. The magistrate and subject were continually in view. Nor is the Gospel silent upon their duties. John the Baptist was imprisoned and beheaded for condemning the sin of Herod. Christ labored for the salvation of Jerusalem, with a zeal which can never be equaled. His apostles spoke to all classes in the State, teaching them, with

great faithfulness, their respective duties. They condemned wickedness in the high places of the land. We want a pulpit to-day that shall endeavor to follow the examples placed before us in the Scriptures.

The Christian minister, to be prepared for the performance of his whole duty, should become acquainted with subjects of national concern. It is often said that he is ignorant of them, and hence is not qualified to give instruction to men in reference to their civil obligations. We do not say that he should neglect at all the study of the Bible, or cease his efforts to unravel the mysteries of theology, or labor any the less earnestly to remove the common vices of the world. We do not affirm that he should confine his attention chiefly to profane history; that he should become learned in the law; or that he should rise to the eminence of the statesman. He should not abandon his holy calling to become a politician; he should not seek place or power; he should not engage in the arts of political strife. But he should understand the nature and mission of Government; the essentials of a proper civil organization, and the whole range of civil virtues. He should know what may be justly required of the several departments of the State, what will contribute to its weal or woe, and whether it is tending to prosperity or ruin. He should stand as a sentinel on its watch-towers. Let him study the political press, look into the caucus, listen to the voice of the tribune. Let him scan parties, and look over the whole machinery by which elections are carried. Let him be a man of political observation and reflection, and then will the Pulpit become a positive power in the State, and none the less so in the Church.

The Pulpit should impart to the people the true spirit of Patriotism, which will constitute their best preparation for

the discharge of their civil duties. Attachment to the land in which we live, and to the institutions established over us, may be a natural sentiment, but it needs to be educated and strengthened by religion. The people of a land are not bound together by mountain chains or far-reaching vales; they are not held by the ties of industrial interests; a common language and religion are not sufficient to preserve them as one body; nor is the memory of a common life, reaching through long periods of the past, and made up of earnest struggles, successes and disappointments. Deeper chords than these, and stronger, must unite them. Patriotism is a religious sentiment. It is, in its most perfect state, a feeling of Brotherhood, inspired by the Gospel of Christ; it is an attachment to institutions which we feel to be fundamentally right, and which, therefore, must meet our needs. Its memories reach back to the Christian patriots and martyrs who were instrumental in achieving them, while its hopes are cherished, and its prayers are offered, for the generations of the future. It embraces a feeling of gratitude to God for the blessings which flow from the State, while it imparts to the mind a solemn sense of its responsibility to him. Thus it consecrates the land and all its interests. It makes it holy ground; every legitimate interest, a subject of prayer; every service it requires, divine in its character. Destroying the spirit of fierce and blind partizanship, it fills the nation with true charity. It eradicates the spirit of inequality or sectionalism, seeking only the common good. It admits of no corruption. The Christian patriot would sooner rob his mother than wrong his country. The State which is pervaded by true patriotism, can command for defence all the treasure within its borders; and there is not one of its subjects who will not pour out his blood in its support. The patriotism of a nation is its defence; and this sentiment must be implanted by the Church. It is a

power imparted by the Gospel. It is fire taken from the altar. It is a light beaming in upon the heart from the realms of day.

The Pulpit should teach the people not to forget their religion while acting the part of citizens. Singular as it may seem, there are many men who stand well in the Church, but who are a disgrace to the State. They pray well, but they vote infamously. They are honest in trade, but tricky in politics. They are charitable as neighbors, while, as members of a party, they are full of bitterness and gall. They are honorable in the general affairs of life, but, to promote an election, there is no depth of meanness to which they will not go. Ordinarily they are careful in the selection of their associates; but in the caucus and town meeting, they are "brothers to dragons and companions to owls." In all this they seem to think they are doing right. They make a virtue of necessity. They do not stop to reflect that victory won by unfair means is worse than defeat. It is better that we should wrong one another, than wrong the State; that we should slander our neighbor, than infuse a poisonous spirit into an entire party; that we should invite crime to our own dwellings, than conduct it to the ballot box. The standard of morality is low enough in the business world, but it is still lower in the political. Men should be taught to carry their religion as citizens wherever they go. They should be morally educated by the pulpit for the special trusts which will devolve upon them in that character, for a general preparation will not be found sufficient. The moral qualifications of the citizen is a theme eminently appropriate for discussion at the present time. One must be converted to the depths of his soul before he is fit for the caucus, or can pass safely through the ordeal of a general election.

But the professing Christian who throws off his religion when he enters the political arena, is not alone to be condemned. He also is to be censured, who, accepting the Gospel as his guide, believes he is justified in neglecting the claims of the State. He witnesses the corruption which exists therein. Multitudes, having no other means for support, crowd around the public treasury. Professing to serve the civil body, they care only to serve themselves. Others, without merit to lift them from obscurity, set on foot some dishonest schemes to secure for themselves place and power. Victory, if not sought for pelf or place, is desired by some for the sake of the victory. The Christian man, who is a stranger to such motives, absents himself from the contest. He fears, if he were to engage in it, he might also become corrupt in his faith and morals; and so, abandoning the Commonwealth, he clings to his altar. He prays that all may go well with the State, and hopes that a Special Providence will be interposed for its preservation. There are multitudes of the most moral and religious members of community who thus neglect their civil duties. Hence our elections, in many cases, are carried by the selfish and debased. The rabble and the mob take possession of the ballot box, and grog-shops and brothels win the day. This evil has been endured too long. It is the imperative duty of the Pulpit to impress upon the mind of every Christian man the importance of discharging the obligations he owes to the Commonwealth. If we are to have the Caucus, let the Church be represented in it. If we are to have the Ballot Box, let it receive the votes of those who have faith in God, and seek to do his will. If we are to have a Government, let it be Christian in its character.

It is the duty of the occupant of the sacred desk to teach the necessity of selecting fit individuals for places of trust

in the State. The best government, if administered badly, becomes a curse to its subjects. A republic becomes intolerable when under the control of demagogues, while a monarchy may well be borne, if the sovereign is paternal. The people of our land need to be instructed to elect their own rulers, for surely a large proportion of those who rise to authority, elevate themselves. Incompetent men, weak and vacillating, and, what is worse, morally depraved, are frequently our rulers. They use the power with which they are invested to perpetuate their term of office, which ought instantly to close; to strengthen their party, and not to benefit the nation; to divide and distract the land, rather than preserve its unity and secure to it the blessings of peace. Our Fathers put statesmen in places of authority; men who feared God, and who, by his blessing, could hold the helm of the Ship of State with a firm and steady hand. Then there was calm deliberation in the halls of legislation, and treason was not rampant in the land. Have we such men in our land to-day? If we have not, God save the State. If we have them, and because of the corruption of politics they cannot be elevated to office, the Pulpit should make them available. Surely it does not go beyond its sphere when it would charge the citizen to vote for the wise, the patriotic, the Christian man. It should be heard in all our elections, not preaching politics or the doctrines of the partizan, but warning the people that they will surely mourn if they consent that the wicked may bear rule; counselling them to select their officers with great caution and prudence, having only in view the highest interests of the State.

The people should be taught by their religious instructors the importance of obeying the laws. They are of their own enactment, and they should not stultify themselves by

trampling them under foot. If they are wrong, let them be amended or repealed; but while they remain upon the statute book, let them be kept. If one may be set aside, so may another, till at length anarchy prevails. We do not say that the servants of God in the elder ages did wrong in resisting heathen laws; but we live under a Christian government, which is of our own creation, and which we can modify at our will, and it is our duty to obey it. Our only security for property, life, and all of our rights, is found in its protecting care. It is not left optional with the people, as some pulpits have taught, to keep the law, or break it and take the penalty. They are to keep it,—and they have no right to choose the latter alternative. Those clergymen are to be condemned,—and that in the strongest terms,—who, singling out certain enactments, instruct their hearers that they are not to regard them. Such teaching tends to undermine the State. It leads directly to rebellion and treason. It would bring about the very condition of affairs which now exists in the Southern portion of our Republic.

But, while the Pulpit should instruct the people to obey the laws of the land, it should condemn those statutes which are morally wrong, and advocate their abrogation. If there is anything contradictory to our religion incorporated into the fundamental law, it should demand that it be stricken out. It has a right to urge the people to the performance of this work, and address itself to legislative bodies to the same end. The wickedness of the law should be made to appear; its disastrous effects should be revealed, in the same manner that individual sinfulness is exposed and rebuked. The Pulpit condemns sin in the Individual, the Household, and the Church; it should do no less in the State. A wicked government will accomplish infinitely more evil work than the individual is able to effect, since its action directly influences many millions, and its example disheartens the good

in all nations. The results of its movements are not limited to the present, but extend far into the future. A corrupt government or party is not likely to purify itself, but the influences which redeem it must be external. Such a government demoralizes the Church itself, which is compelled by the law of self-preservation to undertake the work of its redemption. It gives a bill of indulgence for the commission of sins, which are forbidden in the Gospel of Christ.

The Christian Minister has been far too reluctant in rebuking the sins of the civil body. He has been deterred by the cry raised against political preaching, by a desire to avoid disturbance, and perhaps, in some cases, by the fear of want. He needs more of the spirit of self-sacrifice. Let him, if need be, put off his soft raiment, and put on camel's hair; let him give up his rich repast, and go out in search of locusts and wild honey. Let him not cry "Peace, Peace, when there is no peace;" but smite right and left against the enemies of God seated in authority. The wildest tempest is preferable to the calmest air, when freighted with the miasma of death. Do we preach Politics when we rebuke wrong in the State? Then I suppose that is Mercantile preaching which condemns dishonesty in trade: and that is Scientific preaching which charges the instructors of our schools to regard the moral interests of their pupils. Such folly should be frowned upon, and be repeated no more.

It is the duty of the Pulpit to condemn the traitors who are now threatening the destruction of the Government, and it should demand the overthrow of that institution which has incited them to their unholy work. If the disloyal take refuge in the Church, they should be drawn out; if oppression claims the sanction of religion, the Christian teacher should characterize it as a device of the devil. If we have in our midst, religious bodies which tolerate treason, or forbid their

elected teachers to condemn it, as we have reason to fear may be the case, they should be broken up. If we may credit the journals of the day, a professedly Christian Church, in a neighboring State, has instructed its committee to notify every Clergyman coming to occupy its desk, that in no way must he refer, either in the discourse or the prayer, to the war which is now devastating the land, or to that system of oppression which an eminent servant of Christ has justly defined as "the sum of all villainies." Is this the nineteenth century? Is this New England, the land of the Pilgrims, and are we their descendants? Such a body cannot be called a Church of Christ. It is a communion of "copperheads;" it is a nest of traitors; it is a church of the devil; and were we called to officiate as the head of such an organization, we would, failing in our efforts to regenerate it, see to it that its ruin was thoroughly accomplished. It should no longer remain to disgrace the age, and defile the land which the apostles of impartial liberty have purified with their blood. All honor to the pulpits of our nation which have rebuked its sins, calling upon it to abandon them, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

Righteousness alone can exalt a nation. No individual can be truly prosperous and honorable, without moral worth. He may have wealth and learning, but, unaccompanied by rectitude of heart, they will avail little. He must "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with his God." So is it with the State. Let it fulfil the command "to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke," and it shall realize the promised reward. "It shall build the old waste places, and raise up the foundation of many generations." Its "light shall break forth as the morning, and its health shall spring forth speedily." When "Righteousness goes before it," the "Glory of the Lord shall be its rearward."

Let the Pulpit, then, "cry aloud, spare not, lift up the voice like a trumpet, and show the people their transgression." Let it inspire them anew with the Spirit of Liberty; unite again, and draw still closer, the ties of fraternal love; and teach them to be loyal to the eternal principles of Justice.

Oh, that the Pulpit of America had done its duty to the State. Perils are upon us. The Union, which was cemented by the blood of our Fathers, is threatened with destruction. The Constitution, the wisest and the best instrument of government which man has ever produced, is no longer acknowledged by a large portion of our Confederacy. The Liberties we have enjoyed, and which we have hoped to hand down unimpaired to our children, are in danger. And why is this? It is because so many of our people have departed from the principles, and abandoned the purposes, of the founders of the Republic, who designed that America should be the home of the free to the end of the ages. They believed that the little cloud of servitude which hung over it in their day, would soon vanish, when the entire heaven would be bright with the light of Freedom. Their degenerate sons have labored to divide their inheritance between Liberty and Bondage, and to make these opposite principles perpetual and eternal here. To this end they have employed and prostituted all the arts of diplomacy and legislation; and, failing in these instrumentalities, they have now resorted to the sword. The soil of our country must be drenched anew with the blood of her children. Would these perils have come upon us if the Pulpit had done its duty? But it is awakening to a sense of its obligations to the State. Its most fervent prayers arise to heaven for its preservation. It is speaking in thunder tones in behalf of the Constitution and the Union. It is discoursing earnestly upon the universal and everlasting Rights of Man. Glori-

ous, indeed, is the response of the people, who are offering their treasures and their lives for the redemption of the land. Moved by a religious impulse, they have marched to the post of danger, and, standing there in the very footprints of the Fathers, they will achieve another and a grander victory in the name of Liberty and Humanity. It is a holy warfare; well may the sons of the Church enlist therein. Let the tempest of treason rage—God is mightier than the storm. Let the last great contest between Freedom and Oppression be fought, since it must be so, in the land of Washington. Surely oppressors and traitors can win no permanent triumphs here. When the smoke of the struggle shall have passed away, they shall be found writhing in the agonies of a second death, and every Christian Patriot of the world shall cry, AMEN!



Convention Sermon.

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED BEFORE THE ANNUAL CONVENTION

OF THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH,

IN THE

EASTERN DIOCESE,

IN

GRACE CHURCH, NEW BEDFORD, MASS.,

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1837.

BY WILLIAM H. LEWIS,

Rector of St. Michael's Church, Marblehead.

Boston:

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL PRESS.

Torrey & Blair, printers.

1837.

New Bedford, Sept. 27, 1837.

Rev. and Dear Sir,

The undersigned, clergymen of the Eastern Diocese, adopt the present method of expressing to you the satisfaction with which they listened to the practical and impressive views of ministerial character embodied in your Convention Sermon, and as we are precluded by a standing rule of the Convention from acting officially on the subject, we, individually, request you to furnish a copy of your discourse for the press. Very affectionately,

Your brethren in Christ,

John West, John Bristed, Alexander H. Vinton, Erastus D'Wolf, S. G. Appleton, Wm. Horton, T. Edson, Jona. M. Wainwright, Alfred L. Baury, S. B. Babcock, Thos. M. Clark, Washington Van Zandt, E. Monroe, Thomas Peck, George Taft, James Pratt, J. P. Fenner, John S. Stone, Jos. H. Clinch, E. Livermore, G. W. Hathaway, M. A. D'Wolf Howe, George Waters, A. H. Cull, Dan'l Leach, Ira Warren, Thomas H. Vail, Samuel Fuller, Jr.

New Bedford, September 28, 1837.

Dear Brethren,

The kind spirit with which my Sermon before the Convention was received, has been very gratifying to my own personal feelings ; and may also be regarded as evidence "of an earnest desire after holiness" among the hearers, since even such plain and simple suggestions met with so warm a response. To be instrumental in awakening one holier purpose in any heart, is an honor which an angel might covet, and should this discourse, which at your request is placed at your disposal, in any degree subserve this end, it will be a matter of thankfulness with me. With my prayers for a more sanctified influence, and increased reward for each one of us, I remain

Your friend and brother in Christ,

WILLIAM H. LEWIS.

Rev. John West, John Bristed, Alex'r H. Vinton, &c.

S E R M O N .

ST. JOHN, 17 : 19.

“AND FOR THEIR SAKES I SANCTIFY MYSELF.”

SUCCESS, alone can satisfy the devoted minister of Christ. To be found *faithful* might content him, but if unsuccessful, he can hardly feel assured that he has been faithful. Nothing short of evident fruits would have sufficed the ardent Paul, nothing less will meet the desires of those who breathe his spirit.

But what minister is there, that knows not the anxieties of unsuccessful labor? We look over a world unreclaimed to God, and sigh to think, that when we would reach every human being with the sweet charities of the gospel, we can only soften here and there a hard heart under our own immediate influence, with the love of Jesus. We grieve, that the best of our years for usefulness are gliding away, and the grave must soon close over us, while so little has been accomplished. Oh, tell me how I may win souls for Christ, is our anxious cry. Tell me how my ministry may be rendered more successful?

All who share such anxieties, will look favorably upon the present attempt to answer these inquiries.

The thought which I wish to impress in this discourse is, *that high attainments in holiness are most essential to ministerial success.*

“For their sakes,” says our Saviour, “I sanctify myself.” This implies not merely, as many suppose, that he was set apart as an offering for the sins of the world ; for he adds, “that they,” my disciples, “may be sanctified through the truth ;” so that *his* sanctification and *theirs* seem to be of the same nature, because spoken of without any distinction. Our divine Master sanctified himself, by resisting the temptations of Satan ; by active obedience to God’s law ; and perhaps, also, by a progressive work of sanctification ; for though perfect in childhood, he might become more so in *degree* in manhood ; as he grew in wisdom, though there was no folly in his infancy. But whether progressive, or not, it was by active effort, that he conformed himself to God’s law ; and one end of all was, that he might benefit those whom he came to save. Behold, brethren, the spotless Saviour, sanctifying himself, that he might the more abundantly bless a lost world ! How much more is this necessary for the sinful creatures to whom the same ministry is now entrusted ! Duty, example, and motive, are all presented in our text.

1. That high attainments in holiness are necessary to our success, may be inferred from the fact, *that God demands them from his ministers.*

God knows best what will accomplish the design of his own institutions ; and, above every thing else,

he requires his ministers to sanctify themselves. Holiness to the Lord was written in conspicuous letters upon the high priest's mitre; holy vestments, frequent washing and sacrifices, declared that he would be sanctified among Jewish Priests and Levites. Holiness was the distinction and power of our great High Priest; for his miracles and teaching would have been as ineffectual as theirs who sat in Moses' seat, and by their children cast out devils, unless attended with superior purity. "Take heed to *thyself*, and to thy doctrine," was the apostolic caution; "for in doing *this*, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee," And among all the recorded instances of divine judgments upon prophets and priests, we read of none but such as were inflicted for sin. A want of attainments in divine or human knowledge, or of the gifts of utterance, was never visited with God's displeasure in the least degree; while Korah, Eli's sons, Judas, Caiaphas, Demas, and hundreds more, are examples of his wrath against ungodliness in his ministers. Laws of holiness enjoined upon the priesthood, were given^a at the beginning of the Jewish dispensation, while schools of the prophets were of more recent date, and provisions for purity are much more abundant, than for instruction, throughout the whole Bible. We are not to infer from hence, however, that knowledge and gifts are to be despised; for,

2. In the second place, holiness leads to that knowledge necessary to success in the ministry.

One of the chief defects in preaching is the want of clear, discriminating, and expanded views of divine truth; so that the preacher might often reverse St. Paul's assertion, and say to an intelligent Christian audience, Whom ye truly worship, Him I ignorantly declare unto you. God will not bless a Christ crucified by a sermon, but that Christ crucified, revealed in his word. And our attainments in the knowledge of this great truth, will be in proportion to our personal holiness. An ungodly minister cannot comprehend it. The Spirit will not reveal it to him. A holy heart cannot fail of knowing it. One eminent in piety cannot be kept in a state of spiritual ignorance. If he knew not a letter of his mother tongue, when the grace of God first visited his heart, he would spell out the perfections of God in the heavens, he would catch and treasure up divine truth unheeded by other ears in the sanctuary; he would read it in the mysterious characters of the Spirit within his own soul, and, amid all privations, so digest and connect the great system of redemption, that learned divines might sit at his feet, and be taught by him. And even the union of great piety with high acquisitions in *human* science is not so rare as is supposed. Learning and philosophy, in the eminently sanctified, are like small tapers in the sunlight; they are there as truly, and may shine as brightly, without attracting as much notice, as among the unsanctified, where there is no superior light. Many an one distinguished for piety, has also an extent of reading and reflection, which it

would be the ambition of a worldly mind to display, but which with him passes unnoticed to the grave, and is buried under the epitaph of a good man. Sin closed the door of knowledge in paradise, and ever since has kept it barred, and will, until universal holiness shall again unlock it, and open a thousand fields of science now unknown. The scriptural theory of education, making clean first the heart, will one day be understood; and it is a matter of regret, especially in theology, that it is now so little known. If we need, in our seminaries, professors to teach students how to barb the arrows of conviction, that want must be met by appointing one to lead them to greater attainments in holiness; and most happily, in our general seminary, this want has in a measure been supplied, by giving to one a pastoral care over the souls of those whose minds only before had been thought worthy of culture. Could we measure eminence in piety, the canon requiring literary attainments in candidates for the ministry might be repealed; for it is the ignorance, which is connected with pride and presumption, that is to be dreaded in the Church; and a holy man, whatever attainments he might lack, would bring no more reproach, and be no more to be dreaded, than the lowest angel among higher intelligences in heaven. A holy heart will not neglect any knowledge which can bear upon the recovery of a lost world, will reject all useless studies, will possess the most powerful incentives to diligence, and consecrate all acquirements most effectively to

the furtherance of the Gospel. The Church has nothing to dread from ignorance in the ministry, if it be a holy ministry.

3. Again ; high attainments in holiness will secure those outward gifts and graces necessary to success in the ministry.

Trace any defect in the manner and style of a minister, any thing objectionable in his public or private walk, and it will almost invariably be found that a larger share of grace would have corrected it. The fear of man, displays of self, affected eloquence, tedious prosing, tricks to catch applause, heartless coldness,—all would vanish ; and the minister, clothed with holiness, would be invested with a dignity and grace which nothing else could impart. That unction in preaching, so much admired, so difficult of attainment, is grace in the heart, suffusing the countenance, and flowing forth in every look, and word, and gesture. Under the Law, great pains were taken with regard to the personal appearance of priests, but the Gospel oftener selects the rude in speech, and the despised, like Paul, in bodily presence, giving them holiness in a higher degree, as their compensative power. And let his natural disadvantages be ever so great, let him be like Baxter, a bleeding skeleton, or like Paul, contemptible in appearance,—let him be taken from low employments in life, and brought to minister to the refined and learned, the devoted servant of Jesus will acquire enough of outward gifts to command attention, and to gain success ; and gifts are

desirable only so far as they secure this end. Better than the sword and pebbles of the ancient orator, is the teaching of the Spirit ; and all graces acquired in any other way are but tinsel, which will soon wear off, and disclose the base metal beneath.

4. Again ; holiness in the ministry gives that *confidence*, which is necessary to success.

It is manifestly allied with divine truth, and a standing miraculous attestation of a mission from above. It is the broad seal of Heaven to our credentials, most difficult to be counterfeited. Even heathen priests have felt it so necessary to their reception, that they have aimed at the show of superior sanctity, though not with such success as when they have pretended to miraculous powers. One who can for years live blamelessly among his people, must gain their confidence. Even the wicked will esteem him as a man of God, and “do many things gladly, knowing him to be a righteous man.” Jesus, it is true, was despised of men, but not among the great majority of his countrymen ; and even those, whose outrageous passions were too much opposed by him, to endure him, trembled as they laid their hands upon him. In this country, where Christianity has placed the restraint of its decencies upon all, if a pastor meets with open contempt, or hears a disparaging remark upon his profession, he may generally be sure, that his own misconduct has lowered him, and given license to the tongue of the wicked. If there be any sin indulged by him, he may be sure that they will find it

out. Other men may have their secret besetments, which they can manage to conceal from the world ; but he will be read through and through by those penetrating eyes, which are so constantly fastened upon him, and his most mortifying weaknesses will be dragged to light, and made more public than the grossest offences of the worldling. And one sin divulged, will destroy confidence in his labors. He may preach, and pray, and exhort admirably ; but the wonder will be that he does not practise more. If we would neutralise all our efforts, brethren, let us cherish one sin, even down in the recesses of our souls, and the work of ruin will be accomplished.

Nor can a minister have the necessary confidence in *himself*, if destitute of holiness. God says to the wicked, “ what hast thou to do to take my law in thy mouth ? ” and conscience says the same. It has been made a question, “ whether a preacher should ever go beyond his own experience in preaching ?—he will not be likely to do it, whether he should or not. He will present truth only so far as he endeavors to practise, and rather discourage any thing further than he himself aims at ; so that if we set our standard low, we shall hang as leaden weights on souls panting after perfection, and keep them down to our own wretched level of sinfulness. And sin indulged, will destroy our confidence in addressing them in private. Much is said of the difficulty of parlor preaching. We should find the gift wonderfully improved, by more of closet preaching to our own hearts. Jesus Christ found no

difficulty in introducing religion any where, and we know that when we live near to God, obstacles in the way of this part of our duty are more easily surmounted, and we can speak with freedom. The same man who will deal very plainly with his people from the pulpit, is often afraid to say the same in private, lest the application should be turned upon himself. Our prayer should be, "Open thou our lips, O Lord," by taking away our guilt, "and our mouth shall show forth thy praise."

5. High attainments in holiness qualify the minister to be an experimental guide.

To make these attainments, we must know the depths of Satan, and the power of grace,—the lurkings of pride and selfishness, and the deceitfulness of sin,—the evil of unbelief, and the gloom of despondency,—the comforts of prayer, and the preciousness of Christ. He, who has learned to pluck sin from his own heart, has gained in experience, what it was the glory of Infinite Wisdom to foreknow, and that which man could never teach. And when, in possession of this secret, he is placed in the pulpit, and begins to draw from his own heart, he will reach feelings, which the hearers themselves scarce knew that they shared,—he will force them to exclaim, "he told me all things that ever I did,"—and the "truth will commend itself to their consciences as in the sight of God." The inquirer will find in that man a safe guide,—the doubting a skilful casuist,—the desponding a comforter,—and the saint of the Lord, a conductor to lead him one step higher,

and yet one step higher up that mount of holiness on whose top God dwelleth. A minister, eminent in piety, will rarely find a case among all the varied circumstances of his people, where his own rich experience will not furnish some guidance. And it will often be a matter of wonder with him, how all the dealings of God, in his whole private history, have been bearing upon his own personal sanctification, and thus qualifying him for usefulness. The regret is, that the experience comes so late, and that the skill which it gives us in handling the sword of the Spirit, is gained just as death relaxes our hold upon it. Let us remember that none but the experienced minister can be successful, and that none but the holy can become experienced.

6. Again ; holiness renders the minister a prevalent intercessor with God.

The last thing brought in judgment against those, who have the care of souls, may be, their neglect to mention their people in their prayers : while the first and heaviest charge may be against the *spirit* of their petitions, and of the offerer. How shall we make those countless acts of intercession for our flocks, which we every day offer, more prevalent ? how move that Spirit's influences, which alone can new create the sinner's soul ? Prayer prevails with God just in proportion as we are sanctified. The priest must offer a cleansing sacrifice for himself first, and then for the sins of the people. "God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a worshipper of God, and *doeth his will*, him God hear-

eth." It is "the effectual fervent prayer of the *righteous* man that availeth much;" and Jesus himself to be our intercessor, must be holy, harmless, and separate from sinners. With what hope could a criminal plead for a fellow criminal, or a disobedient child implore favors? while a son distinguished for filial piety, might ask a father and he would feel as if he could refuse him nothing. "When ye make many prayers," God said to the Israelites, "I will not hear you, your hands are filled with blood." "If we *abide in Christ* we may ask what we will, and it shall be done for us of our Father in heaven."

7. Moreover; facts prove that the minister's success is proportionate to his holiness.

We have sometimes seen the servant of God, endowed with every advantage of natural and acquired talent, entering at the very commencement of his career, upon unbounded popularity, called to the highest stations,—followed by admiring crowds,—and made the theme of universal discourse. But the *fruits* of his labors, where are they? We look for them in vain. Like the aeronaut he goes forth amid applause, but in a little time the crowd find that they have had but a *profitless* exhibition, and he himself shortly descends, amidst mortifying circumstances, to be the scoff of those who had just shouted his praise. He wanted that holiness which is necessary to sustained effort, and to draw down the divine blessing, and thus secure a lasting popularity, based upon usefulness; for after all the ease with which mankind are at first led away by

appearance, they will in the end be content only with substantial profit. The minister, whom God *blesses* is brought forward in a different way. He may commence his labors in obscurity—scarcely known among his brethren, who dream not what an instrument for his glory God is preparing among them. But he is growing in holiness. Neglect and contempt subdue his pride. By withholding worldly honors, God teaches him to disregard them, and to feel that the honor which cometh from above is enough. He is daily learning to live upon God and to God alone. As he can bear more of earthly distinction, without elation, it is suffered to come upon him. As the instrument is perfected, a large field of usefulness gradually opens ; and at the close of his career, he may have a name known and honored wherever goodness is prized,—and yet remain all uninjured by this popularity,—and blessed with a degree of usefulness which all admire, and for which he gives the glory to God. Thus that ministry of Paul, the first years of which were passed as a neglected, suspected, and persecuted preacher in Arabia, Cilicia and Damascus, led him on, as he was sanctified for the Master's use, through every renowned city of ancient times, until converts every where, from the sandy desert up to Cæsar's household, blessed his name. Every one, from his own recollections, can furnish similar instances ; for many now most honored in the Church have been by a long series of humbling providences, and large measures of divine grace, matured in holiness, ere they reached that distinction.

It is vain to look for eminence in usefulness, where there is not maturity in holiness. God *may* use the preaching of a wicked minister for the conversion of souls, but it is only as a chance arrow may hit the mark : that he *will* use that of a holy man, may be a matter of calculation and certainty, like the aim of the trained marksman. Experience has established the general rule, that our success may be measured by our holiness, and our holiness by our success. Such a rule may bear hard upon us, and we may be ready to raise as our shield, those oft repeated sayings of unfaithful ministers, concerning “ the seed long buried, and at last springing up,” and “ the treasure being in earthen vessels,” and of the Gospel preached by men of like passions and infirmities ; but the rule is none the less true, because it bears hard upon us. There have been exceptions to this rule ; and there are some in the Bible ; as the cases of Enoch and Noah. There have been instances enough like that of the malefactor’s late repentance, to keep us from despair, if ours be an unsuccessful ministry ; but not enough to encourage indolence and presumption. Ten thousand witnesses testify, that “ whom God sanctifies for his work, him he also glorifies with success.”

We have seen that holiness in the ministry is necessary to success, because God demands it ;—because it leads to those attainments in knowledge, and outward gifts which contribute to usefulness,—because it inspires that confidence, without which none can succeed,—because it makes us experimental guides,

and prevalent intercessors ; and because facts prove that the holy are successful. With these considerations before us, my brethren in the ministry, and with an eye of pity glancing over our fallen world, and a heart of love carrying us back to the beloved flock over which we are placed, can we refrain from saying with all our souls, “ for *their* sakes, I *will* sanctify myself.” If the salvation of men is so connected with my sanctification, here let sin die within my heart, at this altar let me for once say with unqualified assent, “ and here O Lord I present unto thee, myself, my soul and body, to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice unto thee ? ” We of all others have peculiar and higher advantages for attaining holiness. We may think of special hindrances which none others share, but it would be denying the efficacy of the means of grace, in the midst of which we live ;—it would be asserting that the temptations of the world from which we are withdrawn, are not to be dreaded—it would be accusing God of gathering where he has not strawed, when he demands superior sanctity in us,—it would be condemning the universal decision of mankind, and manifesting unthankfulness for our privileges, not to acknowledge that, of all in this sinful world, we can best escape its pollutions. Let superior holiness then be our distinction. That minister is to be pitied who is characterized by any other, whether it be as a man of great intellect,—as a fine scholar,—or as an eloquent orator. If these are the distinctive appellations always associated with the name

of a minister ; they are his shame, instead of his glory, for he has gained them at the expense of his piety. To be first mentioned as a holy man should be his ambition. This is a distinction which may be worn without envy. While the jealousy of little minds is always hovering around greatness of any other kind, striving to pluck a feather, the man whose characteristic excellence is holiness, may stand as an angel drawing admiration and attention, while detraction is silent ; and envy herself is ready to fall down and do homage. When attainments in mere earthly things come in contrast with our own, it is self conflicting with self, and drawing away worship from one idol to another : but when holiness is manifested, it is God in the soul, and every idol falls before his reflected image. And the power of holiness for usefulness, is one which *all* may wield. We may see deficiencies in ministerial qualifications which we can never hope to remedy, but all arms are of a length in reaching after holiness, and the more we are conscious of such deficiencies, the more should we seek after that which will most easily cover them. Thank God, it is not by those things which his providence places out of the reach of so many, that the world is to be converted to himself, for then multitudes might despair. But if it be by sanctifying ourselves, a door of hope and usefulness is open to the humblest of us. Let it animate with a holy ambition after perfectness. Let our unceasing prayer be ; “ O my God purify and use me, in thine earthly service,—purify and use, purify and use, until

I am made a vessel of gold in thine house, sanctified and meet for the Master's use ;—yea until as the last sin drops from me forever, (O blest hour, when the last shall release its hold !) I rise to thine eternal and perfect service in heaven."

And we ask the prayers of our fellow Christians, that we may be sanctified. Their own interest seconds the appeal, for the ministers of Christ are the property of the Church, and all that advances their worth is the people's gain. Much of remaining imperfection will be witnessed, in the best of them, but their faults should no more be a matter of malignant triumph and detraction, than the wounds of a leader in the battle, should rejoice the hearts of his soldiers. It is a mark of true piety if we grieve over the failings of ministers, and pray much for their sanctification.

But this subject has an application to every private Christian as well as to ministers, for they have the power of holiness to exert, and it will give them success in the same ways. We want more of the co-operation of pious laymen in our Church. And if they will come to our aid with that sanctified influence, which shall be divested of arrogance and spiritual pride, we shall hail the day, when the talents of our pious members of the Church, shall be consecrated to the Church in more prominent efforts for the service of our Redeemer. They are bound to make such consecration. No prejudice against this—no frowns of ministers can release them from their obligation.—They will be ashamed to enter heaven, if they have

not endeavored to discharge it. One would think the angels might meet them and exclaim : “ live on earth, and do nothing for Christ!—live twenty, forty, or sixty years and not convert a soul,—live with the knowledge of Jesus, and not spread it,—live amid dying sinners and not strive to save them!”—and that then, they might withdraw with wondering looks, and converse apart upon the strangeness of the fact, more mysterious to them than the divine decrees which the poet represents fallen spirits of as discussing. We may enter heaven, as the poor of this world,—as the despised, neglected, and persecuted, and be none the less welcome ; but if we could enter thither, having done little for Christ, I know not where we should find society among those benevolent spirits above. Let us not, dear brethren, leave this world of sin with such a character. Let us sanctify ourselves, and carry hence, when we separate, an extended hallowed influence for Christ. May we be found faithful in our respective spheres of duty, until called to that world where “ he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified shall be one,” for our great Redeemer’s sake. AMEN.



The Traditions of Men.

A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN THE

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

IN

NORTH BRANFORD,

January, 1833.

BY JUDSON A. ROOT.

NEW HAVEN:

PRESS OF WHITMORE AND MINOR.

1833.

A DISCOURSE.

MATTHEW XV. 6.

Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

THE Jews, in the time of Christ, pretended that Moses, in addition to the commandments of God, which were engraven on tables of stone, also delivered *orally* many precepts and instructions to their fathers, which had been transmitted in the same manner, from one generation to another, down to their time. These pretended instructions, thus derived, they called *traditions*. Since the time of Christ they have been collected by the Jewish Rabbins and committed to writing; and the book composed of them is called the *Talmud*. The Jews were accustomed to regard these traditions as peculiarly sacred and important. And although in most cases they respected only the outward ceremonies of religion, and hence if they had been divinely appointed, (which is more than questionable with regard to many of them,) they would have been only of secondary importance, yet they were regarded by many, and by the vain Pharisees especially, as of more consequence than the written law of God. So great was their regard for these traditions, that in their zeal to follow them, they had virtually set aside, and were living in the habitual violation of the plain commandments of God. The Savior, in his accustomed faithfulness, reproved them for this unauthorized and sinful practice, pointing them to a particular instance in which they had thus annulled a divine command; and in the words of my text gave a plain statement of their conduct.

But the Jews are not the only men who have shown a disposition to substitute something in the room of the pure Word of God. And, if I mistake not, it will be found upon examination, that there are those of our times who have their Talmud as well as their Bible; and that in cases not a few they do as really as those censured in our text, make the commandments of God of none effect by their traditions.

To notice some of these, and to show how through their influence the Word of God is set aside, or the force of its authority diminished, and thus to make an application of this important passage to our times, is the object of this discourse.

One of these, and one which has laid the foundation for some others, is this, *that God could easily prevent all sin forever in the universe.*

This is a tradition ; or mere human opinion. It is not Scripture. And the men who affirm it ought to prove their affirmation. Now we do not affirm the contrary, and say that God could not prevent all sin forever ; or the present degree of it. We only say that it is *possible* that he could not forever prevent all sin in a moral system. It has never been *proved* that he *could*. And men should make no such affirmation unless they prove what they affirm. The subject has an important bearing on the character of God, and on human accountability ; and men should be very cautious what theories they frame, or what speculations they make on a subject so important. We make no positive affirmations in regard to this subject. We dare not make any. For we know too little of the matter to pretend to decide with certainty, either that God *could*, or *could not*, forever keep sin out of a universe of free moral agents. But we say it *may* be true that he could not. And until more is known on the subject than can be known here, men have no liberty to say that he could.

And what is the evidence that men have relied on to justify them in this positive assertion ? That which has been relied on as decisive in the case, and which the advocates of the theory have never supposed to be questionable, is the fact of God's omnipotence. The Scriptures seem to assert, without any limitation, that with God all things are possible. And the opinion which men have embraced in relation to our present subject, is founded, no doubt, on a very becoming reverence for this perfection of the Godhead. And I would, by no means, say any thing which shall in the least impair or lessen the degree of our reverence of any perfection of God. But most obviously there are some limitations, even to omnipotence. Startling as the suggestion may be, still it is founded in truth ; and the assertion may be made with reverence, and the truth of it may be rendered evident, that there are some limitations, even to omnipotence. There are some things which do not come within the range of omnipotence ; over which it has no control ; and to which it has no relation. Let me illustrate the subject. If God were to exercise his omnipotence in an act of creation, the merest breath of his power would bring into being a world, and people it with multitudes in an instant. In a case like this he has only to speak and it is done. Here is a proper field for the exercise of omnipotence. And an act of power, an exertion of omnipotence like this, might probably be repeated at every succeeding instant, for a whole eternity. But suppose God were to utter his voice of omnipotence and command that any of the creatures he has made, should be both dead and alive at the same instant. Would the thing commanded be done ? Is the thing commanded a possibility, even to omnipotence itself ? Most plainly here is a limit to this divine attribute. Here is one thing at least, that omnipotence cannot accomplish. Suppose again, that God were to utter his voice of authority, and say, I hereby declare that henceforth it shall be right for my creatures to hate me, and wrong for them to love the perfect excellence and loveliness of their Creator ; would the decision and determination of the omnipotent God change at all the nature of these actions of

his creatures, and make it right for them to hate, and wrong for them to love the perfect excellence and loveliness of their Creator? Most plainly, here again is something which omnipotence cannot effect. Let us suppose a case which brings us directly to our subject; or rather, let us look at a case of actual occurrence. God has uttered his voice of authority in terms too plain to be misinterpreted, that all his creatures obey his commands; that all maintain a character of holiness. But the thing commanded is not done. And why is it not? Possibly for the reason that it is a matter beyond the range of omnipotence; over which it has no very extensive control; and to which it has no particular relation. When we talk about God's preventing sin, the question pertains to the subject of God's moral government of his creatures. And the influence used in *governing*, is an influence consistent with moral action. Omnipotence is concerned in the *creation* of beings, and in *upholding* them in existence; but a government *by law* cannot be administered by the mere dint of power; nor can obedience to law consist in any thing but the act of an agent who has power to disobey. Here, then, is not a proper field for any exercise of omnipotence, which crushes moral agency in the performance of moral action. Who ever thought of making great physical or muscular strength a qualification for a legislator or a magistrate; or estimated his success in preventing crime, merely according to the degree in which he was known to possess such qualification? Excellence in one who sustains these relations, consists in his superior knowledge, and wisdom, and integrity; and not in his bodily strength. I would not, however, be understood to mean, that the omnipotence of God is not in any measure employed in his moral government of his creatures. In arranging and controlling their circumstances, and in bringing the influence of motives to bear upon them, and in securing their influence by the power of his Spirit, no doubt his omnipotence is employed. But it is not, and from the nature of the case cannot be employed in an irresistible influence in producing the obedience of his creatures as a mere passive effect, as it is employed in their creation. Indeed, it is quite possible and therefore supposable that omnipotence itself should be inadequate to secure the obedience of creatures, who, as free moral agents, can sin, and whose freedom omnipotence must not impair. When men say, therefore, that God could easily keep sin out of the universe forever because he is omnipotent, and because that with God all things are possible, they evidently say nothing to the purpose. And here is all the evidence for the support of this long established tradition. And yet men have repeated it over and over again, as though the truth of it were settled by an indubitable declaration of God.

But there are objections to this theory, which have been in some measure suggested in what we have said, but which deserve a more particular specification. Such an objection is found in the very nature of a system of government by law. The subjects of such a system are free agents—beings endowed with the power of choice—and susceptible to happiness from objects which are placed around them to minister to their enjoyment. The only influence which can

be used with them to control their conduct, must be of such a kind as is consistent with their free agency. Any thing like force or compulsion, is from the nature of a system of moral government, of necessity excluded. The appropriate influence to be used in governing, is a *moral influence*; that is, an influence consistent with free moral action. This is, and must be an influence on moral agents who can do wrong; and of course, must be an influence which they can resist. The subjects of God's government, are intelligent, voluntary beings; and obedience to his law, must be an intelligent, voluntary movement, which cannot be made without the influence of the motives addressed to them by their Lawgiver and Judge. And this plain, common-sense view of the matter, is in perfect correspondence with that of the Bible, on the subject of Divine influence in the production of holiness. Truth, is there expressly asserted to be the instrument by which the Holy Spirit subdues the opposition of the sinner, and brings him to submission to God's righteous will. Every thing which has any relation to the subject, corroborates the opinion, that a system of government by law cannot be administered without the influence of motives. Certainly there can be no influence used with them, which shall be inconsistent with this, none which shall be inconsistent with the fact that they act freely in view of motives. Indeed, it comes not much short of a self-evident truth, that if *intelligent* beings are to be moved to an *intelligent* obedience, it must be under the influence of motives presented before them, persuading them to render it. And the degree of *this* influence must be limited to that which they are capable of resisting. For the moment you suppose that they are pressed even with an influence from motives, so great that they have no power to resist it, that moment they cease to be free; and the system they compose, is no longer a system of government by law, but one of compulsion or mechanical force. The very nature of a system of moral government, therefore, requires that the subjects of it be left free. Their freedom of action must be left unimpaired. In all the circumstances of their being, they *can*, therefore, either obey or transgress. They must have, in all the circumstances of their being, power to obey, or their transgression is not a crime; and power to sin, or their obedience is not a virtue. In every instance of accountable action, this freedom, this power of choice, must remain unimpaired and untouched, or they cease at once to be fit subjects of a perfect government. And now, who is authorized to say, that God, leaving their freedom unimpaired—leaving them as he must, capable either of obedience or transgression—who is authorized to say, that he can use with them an influence of the kind we have been considering, and the only influence which the case admits of, sufficiently powerful forever to insure universal obedience. Very plainly no one is authorized to make any such assertion. They *can* resist the influence. This must be admitted, or we must say their freedom is destroyed. And if they *can* resist effectually any influence which may be used with them, who can *know* or *prove* that in some instances, at least, they will not. And if no man knows this, or can prove it, who is authorized, with-

out knowledge or evidence, to assert it? Very plainly every man is bound to say, that, if God permits such a system of free agents to exist, it is *possible* that no influence he can use with them as subjects of government, will forever insure universal obedience. And every candid man will say, that for aught that appears, sin *may* come into God's kingdom, against all the influence which he can employ in the case to prevent it.

But this is not the only objection we have to urge against this theory. We derive another from the unequivocal expressions which God has made of his preference of holiness to sin. Just look at the movements of God in this world of apostacy and guilt. And what is the one, great, commanding, absorbing subject of the mind of God. The object upon which his heart is set; the thing which he seems intent upon securing? The answer is obvious. It is to influence his creatures to do right; to keep them from sin and from misery. God is seeking to glorify himself by securing, in the highest possible degree, the happiness of his creatures; and their happiness by their holiness as the necessary means. What is his law which requires perfect holiness, but an expression of his preference for holiness to sin? It is not a law if it do not express such a preference. And look too at the sanctions of that law—the highest possible good and evil, promised and threatened, to deter from sin and to allure to obedience. And we see in the greatness of these sanctions, evidence, not of a slight preference, only a little remove from indifference with regard to the thing commanded, but of a strong and decided preference for obedience to sin. Obedience is the thing which he seems intent upon securing. What is the atonement but a gracious provision, made at the expense of God, to recover men from sin, and from misery, and to bring them back to holiness and to happiness. And the greatness of the sacrifice, shows the strength of his desire for their recovery—the strength of his preference of holiness to sin. And when we hear God using such language as this, “O that there were such an heart in them that they would fear me and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children for ever;” who can doubt that he really, sincerely, earnestly desires that they should all thus obey him—be holy and happy forever, rather than that they should sin and be miserable forever. When we hear him saying with moving entreaty, “Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, for why will ye die;” who can believe that he does not most sincerely and earnestly desire that they should turn and live, rather than go on in their ways of evil and die. When we hear him using the forcible language of interrogation, saying, “Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, and not that he should return from his ways and live?” do we not hear him appealing to the very judgment of his creatures to decide, that he does ever prefer their obedience and happiness to their sin and consequent ruin. And is not the decision of such a preference awarded to him, they being judges. And when we hear him in the language of compassion, deploring the wretchedness of those whom mercy hath forsaken, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest

the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not ;” who does not believe that he most earnestly preferred that they should have yielded to the influence which had been used with them to bring them to repentance and to heaven, rather than to resist and perish in their impenitence. And when we hear him saying concerning his revolted people, in remembrance of his own efforts for their good, “ What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it ;” who does not believe that he preferred their obedience to their sin, and that he had done all that he wisely could to prevent their sin. Such evidence as the foregoing shows, if any can show, God’s unqualified and strong preference, in all cases in which his creatures have sinned, that they should have obeyed. But does God desire an event with all this intensity of feeling, and will he leave any measures consistent with the greatest amount of good, untried to secure it ? Does he so earnestly desire the universal obedience of his creatures to their disobedience, and is it so easy, as has been said, for him to secure the obedience of all forever, and will he not do it ? How is such language in God accordant with any degree of sincerity, if he does not secure a universe of perfect holiness, when as it is said, it is so completely within his power, and withal so easy of accomplishment—when he has only to speak and it is done. We leave such questions for the advocates of that opinion to answer. And we leave for them the still more difficult task, to vindicate the *goodness* of God, if he can most easily prevent the sin and ruin of all his creatures, and yet permits some of them to sin and be miserable for ever. While he exhibits only an appearance of effort, a show of sincerity for the welfare of his creatures, when he has no real desire or preference that the thing he appears so zealously engaged in should be done.

I surely need not pursue this subject farther to exhibit its true character. Enough has been said to show, that men are wholly unauthorized in saying that God could keep sin entirely out of his kingdom. An opinion that has little more than the shadow of evidence to support it, and which is fraught with objections so important, should not be incorporated into our very creeds, and ranked among the doctrines of our faith. We surely have good reason for withholding our assent. And we should hope not to incur the charge of defection from the faith, if we venture to suggest that *possibly* it may be that sin and the punishment of it are inseparable from a system of free moral agents ; that it *may* be that sin enters the kingdom of God against all the opposing influence which is possible to God and consistent with a system of government by law ; and that the amount of holiness and happiness he will finally secure will be such as will show his power to bless.

We ought not, however, to be misunderstood here, as we often have been, and be supposed to say that God could not have prevented sin in any of the particular cases in which it has actually occur-

ed. It is probable that he might. Probably in *any* individual case in which sin has occurred, he might have so arranged the circumstances with respect to the individual, and have so presented the motives to obedience, as to have prevented the sin. It is probable too, that if the same influence had been used to reclaim some who are lost, that have been used with effect with some who are saved, that these measures would have been effectual also in their reformation. The Savior has explicitly asserted this of the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, who perished in their guilt. This point is an important one ; and let me secure a clear apprehension of it by a plain illustration. Here is a human government organized. In its code is found a law forbidding murder, and threatening the violation of it with death. Suppose that the magistrate of this commonwealth foresees, that a few days hence one of his subjects will be tempted to murder. He foresees too, we will suppose, that he can so order his circumstances, and present motives to obedience, as to secure him from committing the sin. But he knows too, that in a future period of his administration there will be several others tempted to the same sin, and that it will not be possible for him so to order their condition, and press them with motives to obedience, as to prevent their sin, provided he so changes his system as to secure the obedience of the first ; and therefore, as a wise and benevolent man, resolved upon securing the highest amount of obedience and happiness possible for him to secure, he determines to let the first mentioned yield to the temptation, and become an example of warning to the others not to commit the offense, rather than so to change his system of administration as to prevent him. Now just apply this to the divine administration. We say that it is probable that God might have secured from apostasy any individual who has apostatized. We have no objection to saying that *possibly* he might have secured *all* in obedience who have as yet sinned : so that there should not have been, up to this time, a single instance of transgression, or a solitary example of punishment. But the question is, would it have been a wise and safe course of administration. *May* it not be, that an influence is now produced, by the course God has pursued in permitting the present degree of sin, and in exhibiting the evil consequences of it, which restrains, and which will effectually and forever restrain greater multitudes, who but for this influence would transgress, and could not be restrained from transgression. It *may* be so. We do not affirm that it is so. We only suggest that it *may* be so.—We are willing to admit too the possibility that God might have brought to repentance and salvation all who have sinned ; even the apostate angels as well as men. But the question is would it have been a wise and safe course of administration. Suppose he had done so : so that not a single example of punishment for sin had been known in his kingdom : not only no suffering for sin, but redeemed and recovered sinners actually enjoying greater blessedness than they would have enjoyed if they had never sinned. For this is supposed to be true of redeemed sinners. Now suppose this had been done. And does not every mind see,

that the law of God forbidding sin, and the penalty threatened against it, would have little or no restraining influence. This is sufficiently manifest. It has become a well-established principle in human governments, that the exercise of the pardoning power is unsafe. And may it not be so in the Divine government. *May* it not be, that if God had brought all to repentance and salvation, or any more than he has done, that greater evil would have been the unavoidable consequence. Our observations, therefore, let it be understood, respect, not *individual* cases of sin, but his *whole kingdom*, and that too in the whole extent of its duration. And all we say is, that it *may* be, that a system cannot be permitted to exist, the subjects of which are free agents, and by any influence which is possible in the case, wholly and forever to prevent their sin. But that there is good reason for believing that the present degree of sin and suffering which has existence under his government, and which will yet have existence, may be the least possible for God; and that the amount of holiness and happiness he has secured and will secure may be such as will show the measure of his power to produce. It *may* be so. No one is therefore at liberty to affirm that the contrary is certainly true, and draw inferences from it which have an important bearing upon the character of God, and upon human accountability, until he *prove* his affirmation. Yet this is a theory, the truth of which, many have never seemed to doubt, that God could easily prevent all sin and suffering in his kingdom forever. It is a tradition of men, or mere human opinion. And one which in itself and as the foundation of others, has had no little influence in disrobing God of his glory, in impairing human accountability, and in making the Word of God of none effect, and powerless in its influence in bringing men to repentance and to God.

Another tradition of men, which seems to have been founded on the foregoing, is, that *God decreed sin and secured its existence, as the necessary means of the greatest good*:—in other words it is said, that *greater happiness will result to the universe from the existence of sin, than could have been enjoyed if the whole universe had forever remained holy; and that God decreed and secured the existence of sin, because that greater happiness to the universe would be the consequence*. But how does this accord with the representations of Scripture, in respect to the feelings with which God looks upon sin. Are not these representations most clear, and unequivocal, and decided, that he looks upon it with no complacency, but with the most entire aversion and abhorrence. Upon what page of the Bible shall we look for any different representation. Where does it say, or even obscurely intimate that sin is a good thing; and that God wishes his creatures should sometimes commit it, rather than obey him. But if it is the necessary means of the greatest good;—if so much happiness cannot result to his kingdom without sin as with it, then verily is it a desirable thing; and God as a benevolent being should be pleased with it, and should tell his creatures so; and they, instead of being blamed for committing it, should be praised and rewarded, as the instruments of so much good. Every act of sin

that has ever been committed, is, on this scheme, a better thing, a more desirable event, than would have been an act of holiness in its stead; and they who have been the occasion of this greater good should receive the praise of God and of every benevolent mind. What shadow of sincerity is there in all God's declarations of his abhorrence of sin; what justice in his denunciations of wrath against those who commit it, if it be necessary, the indispensable means of the highest good, and if he for that reason secures its existence. How by this supposition is the burden of the guilt of disobedience, and the conviction of ill-desert at once removed from the sinner; and how is the Godhead despoiled of its brightest glories.

From the testimony of Scripture, shall we turn to the evidence of *facts* for the support of this theory. But what is there from this source in its favor. Is it said, that the redeemed will enjoy greater happiness than would have been possible for them if they had never sinned? I know it is often *said* so. But then we want proof of the assertion. I know it has often been said, as though it were an unquestionable verity. But it is far from being a self-evident proposition. It needs something besides mere assertion to sustain it. It is admitted, that the redeemed sinner may have different feelings—joys from other sources from what he would have had, if he had never sinned, and been the object of God's forgiveness. But that his happiness will on the whole be greater than it would have been if he had always remained holy, and an object of God's complacent regard and favor, is not so evident. But let it be admitted without proof, that the redeemed will be more happy, and enjoy a greater amount of blessedness than they would have enjoyed if they had never sinned. Let this be admitted: and the truth of the theory we are considering does not follow as a consequence, viz. that the amount of good enjoyed by the *universe* will be increased by the existence of sin and redemption from it. For, to say nothing of the diminution of the happiness of the holy and benevolent in heaven, as they look upon the fall and ruin of the finally impenitent; to say nothing of the agonies of the Son of God in the work of redemption: yet there are a countless multitude who are shut out from the joys of God's kingdom, and who will be forever sinking in the miseries of hell in consequence of sin. Their sufferings must be reckoned up, and the amount told, before we can decide whether the universe is, on the whole, rendered happier by the admission of sin, and the increased happiness of the redeemed.

Besides, how is it possible for the redeemed to enjoy their supposed higher elevation, if they know that it has been purchased at the expense, and so great expense sustained by those who would otherwise have been forever their companions in blessedness. They are beings of perfect benevolence. They delight in the happiness of others as they do in their own. And now, unless I have ever misapprehended the nature of benevolence, I am prepared to say, without any hesitation, that it would be an impossibility for the redeemed to enjoy an elevation of blessedness, purchased by the sufferings of beings whose welfare they value as their own. Methinks

it is quite safe to make the appeal even to the imperfect benevolence of men in this world, and rest the decision of it there. No parent, not even the mother, with her ardent and ceaseless affection, probably loves her child as she loves her own self. Strong as is her attachment, when the hour of trial came, she would probably give up her child to death, before she would purchase it at the expense of her own life. The purest and strongest affection of earth falls short of that of heaven. Yet imperfect as is the love of mortals, we are willing to make the appeal to their feelings, and rest the decision of the question under consideration with them. And where is the parent who could enjoy any blessedness purchased by the sufferings of the child of her love? The sight of that object in anguish before her, would change that blessing into a curse. And if such be the operation of the imperfect love of mortals, how can we suppose that the perfectly benevolent beings of heaven can enjoy an elevation purchased by the sufferings of their once happy companions. The supposition is an absurdity : for the thing supposed is an impossibility. Every harp of redeemed sinners would be unstrung; and every tongue would be silent; if they believed the sin and ruin of their companions, to have been the necessary means of their greater joy.

And, besides, what has become of the *justice* of God, if the theory we are opposing be true? The advocates of this theory suppose that God saw that if sin should be permitted to enter his dominions, the increased happiness of the holy in consequence of it, would more than counterbalance the misery of transgressors. For this purpose he determined so to arrange the affairs of his government, as to secure the sin and misery of some of his creatures. But what has become of God's justice if such have been his dealings? What would you think of that father, who should decoy one of his obedient and unsuspecting children into transgression of his command, that he might seem to have cause for displeasure, and have a plausible pretext of sending him into banishment, and of bestowing the whole of his estate upon the rest? Where would be the justice of such a procedure, even though it be supposed that the increased happiness of the rest more than counterbalances the sufferings which their brother in exile must endure? You are all prepared to say that no father, who is guided by principles of justice in the administration of his affairs would ever do any such thing. And surely we must not impute to God a kind of conduct, which would be regarded as unjust and unholy if practised by men. From whatever point of view, therefore, we look at the opinion, that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good, we discover it to be radically imperfect. It is entirely discordant with Scripture, and at variance with the principles of the Divine administration. It is a mere human tradition. And so long has it been received, and so oft repeated, that it has come to be regarded as an article of faith, standing along side of the pure doctrines of the Bible; and he must be denounced as unsound in the faith, who shall dare to question its correctness.

Another tradition, which was probably derived as an inference from the one first considered, is, that *another reason why God decreed sin, and secured its existence in his kingdom, was to give him an opportunity of displaying his perfections—his mercy in forgiving some, and his justice, in punishing the rest.* A single glance at this theory will be sufficient to discover its deformity. We see God on the throne of the universe, legislating over a kingdom of obedient and happy subjects. He has transmitted to them a perfect system of rules for their conduct; and has thrown around them the whole influence of his authority to secure their obedience. They yield a cheerful obedience to his authority; and are perfectly happy in doing his will. The entire community of his subjects, all the dwellers in his wide-extended kingdom, look up to their Father on the throne, rejoice in his supremacy, and pay him the adoration, and the homage, and the love, of grateful, and confiding, and obedient children. And, according to the belief of the defenders of this theory, it were perfectly easy for God, for he is omnipotent, say they, to secure this state of things—this universe of perfect holiness and blessedness, unstained and untroubled forever. But he seems to be fearful that his subjects will not be thoroughly convinced of his goodness. And he resolves to decoy off some of his obedient and happy subjects from their allegiance to him, into the transgression of his commands, to give him an opportunity of making manifest his kindness for them, by making the sacrifice of his Son for their redemption. To show to a witnessing universe how very far he will go for their good: and withal, to make a display of his justice, and his sovereignty, in leaving some of them to perish forever. Were any human governor to pursue a similar course, he would forfeit his reputation in the judgment of every virtuous citizen; and who can believe this of the perfect God? Yet, this has seemed to be with many, a very favorite opinion;—a darling theme;—a subject, upon which they seem very happy to expatiate; that God has secured the existence of sin with the sole intent of providing himself with an opportunity to display Himself to a wondering universe. And the man has more than once been denounced as an heretic, who has dared to question the correctness of their belief.

Let us proceed now to the examination of some traditions of a different class. One of them, and the first which I shall mention, is this, that *the whole human race sinned when Adam sinned.* The authors of so excellent a system of divinity, as in most respects is our Catechism, relate the sentiment after this manner: all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression. Now this is not figurative language, but the plain statement of what they supposed to be fact. Their meaning lies on the very face of their words. This meaning the interpreters of that system of doctrines have affixed to the statement. Edwards, than whom our country has seldom produced a more profound theologian, gives such an interpretation. But great and venerable as is the name of Edwards, and profound and excellent as are most of his writings; learned and pious as were

the Westminster assembly of divines, and true and excellent, as in general, is the system of divinity they compiled, yet when they publish the sentiment that the race of Adam sinned hundreds and thousands of years before they existed; we may, as I think, without much irreverence or rashness, express our dissent. Were the combined piety and learning and talents of the world to coincide with them, and make this an article of their faith, still in the use of the plain common sense that God has given us, we must express our dissent. For, verily, we do know, if we know any thing, that the thing affirmed is an impossibility. This tradition, we trust, is not much held to at the present day.

Another which has come in its stead, and which, in our judgment, is not much less absurd than the one whose place it supplies, is that *we are born sinners*: or that *we are sinners before we sin*. What is sin? Let an apostle answer. Sin is the transgression of law. Does this definition need any explanation? What is the transgression of law? What but doing that which God has forbidden: or, what is the same thing, refusing to do that which he requires? Surely this is all very plain. Sin is the transgression of law. We understand now what sin is; for the apostle, guided by the Spirit of Inspiration has told us. Is any one, then, I ask, a sinner before he transgresses law? Is any one a sinner before he sins? And especially, are we born sinners? Upon the authority of an inspired apostle, are we not authorized in saying that any being must have some understanding of what is right and wrong before he can transgress law and become a sinner? How is it possible for sin to pertain to a being who knows nothing of law, nothing of right and wrong? The same apostle denies that it can: for he says again, where no law is, there is no transgression. And does not common sense teach the same thing? Suppose then, the infant, upon the day of its birth, before it has transgressed law—before it has acted either right or wrong—taken to the judgment seat of God, and there condemned as a sinner. Suppose, also, by this change of place, his understanding had, upon the moment, become sufficiently expanded and enlarged to apprehend the sentence of his Judge. Would he plead guilty to the charge? Guilty of what! He never has sinned. And for what, he might ask, am I condemned: and for what could he feel guilty? Verily, my hearers, unbiassed common sense can come to but one conclusion on this subject. If the definition which the apostle has given of sin, have a meaning that we can understand, then surely we are not sinners before we sin: and the theory we are opposing is not true.

How comes it to pass then, we are asked, that all mankind do invariably sin, so soon as they act as moral beings? How shall we account for this fact, unless we suppose that they are created with a sinful disposition, which is the cause of their sinful acts? Must not the cause be like the effect? Must not the fountain be like the streams? And if the streams are sin, do they not prove the fountain to be sin? These questions are often asked as though they perfectly illustrated the case, and as though they carried with them

their own answer. And no doubt many have been deceived by them, and thus led to a wrong judgment in the case before us. Illustrations like this are very excellent in discussions of this kind, provided they are apposite to the case in hand; otherwise they do the more effectually mislead. Let us look at the example used for an illustration here. Is not the fountain like the streams? Yes, I answer. And if the streams be sin, do they not prove the fountain to be sin? Yes, I answer again. And I add, if the sinful actions of men *are streams*, and if the soul from which they proceed *is the fountain* that supplies them, why then, I admit that the fountain is sin: and the advocates of a propagated sinful nature have gained their point—their case is clear. Sin has run in the blood, or some how else from Adam until now. But if the thing supposed for illustration has no resemblance to the thing to be illustrated, why then we have only to say that they must get a better, or they have proved nothing. But it is asked, must not the cause be like the effect? I know that by many it has seemed to be regarded as a self-evident truth, which cannot be rendered more evident by proof. But I shall venture to deny that it is always so, and will show you the instance. Take the case of the first sin that ever had existence. Was the cause like the effect in that instance? The effect was sin: but was the cause sin? Was there sin in existence before the first sin, which was the cause of it? Here most manifestly was sin as an effect, without sin as a cause. And it proves that when men draw conclusions on the subject before us, and assert the existence of a propagated sinful nature which is the cause of our sinful acts, on the ground that the cause must be like the effect, they draw conclusions from false premises; and their conclusions are as false as the premises. And it proves too that the sinful actions of men now *may* proceed from something beside an hereditary *sinful* nature as its cause.—But does the question again come back, how shall we account for the fact, that all do invariably sin as soon as they can, unless we suppose an inherited sinful nature? I say in reply to it that it is not my business to-day to publish any theories of my own on this or any other subject: but to expose what I deem to be the false theories of others. With regard to the *fact* that all do sin as soon as they act as moral beings, we are agreed. We admit the *fact*. But whether we can give a satisfactory *reason* for the fact is another thing. Perhaps we cannot. Possibly we know not enough about the subject to tell how it certainly is. And if some, in attempting to account for the fact, say that it must be because God created us with a sinful nature which is the cause of our sinning, and if we think their reason is an absurd one, and withal dishonorable to God, we have a right, and we are bound to say so. And we may do it without being obliged to give any other reason which *shall* account for the fact. For it may be that we cannot: and should we attempt it, possibly we might run into as groundless absurdities as they. The most that we have to say on the case at present is that we do not like the reason which they have assigned. And ought we to incur the charge of heresy for having ventured to say that *possibly*

their reason is not according to truth? For we can say this much, with certainty: that sin *can* originate in something besides a *sinful* nature. For it did in Adam. It did in the rebel angels. They were not sinners before they sinned. And if any one will attentively consider how *their* sin *did* originate, he may be led to a correct solution of the question *how* it originates *now*.

Nor ought we to pass this place without just mentioning a sentiment of recent origin, which seems to have been adopted by some in the place of the tradition last noticed; viz. that *moral agency is co-eval with existence*: or more particularly, that the infant begins to act as a subject of law, and an accountable being, and acts wrong; becomes a rebel against God, and a sinner by his own acts, at the very moment of his existence. We feel little inclination to multiply words on this subject; and less still to make it a matter of controversy; for we see no very great harm that is likely to result from belief of the sentiment. If others think they have evidence sufficient to justify them in the belief and adoption of the sentiment that the infant transgresses law, and becomes a rebel against God at the very moment of its birth, why let them believe and adopt it. We feel more inclined to pity than to complain. We only object to their complaining and denouncing if we say we do not see evidence of the fact sufficient to command our belief; and if we feel obliged to say that we cannot tell the precise time when moral agency and sin do commence.

Another tradition connected with the foregoing is this, that *some who have died in infancy are probably in heaven, and others in hell*. And all we have to say with regard to it may be said very briefly. We undertake to show neither the truth, nor the incorrectness of the assertion. For we know nothing about the facts. God has made no particular revelation on the subject. And we are willing to leave the subject of the future condition of infants, just where God has left it:—in the secret counsels of his infinite wisdom.

And dismissing the subject thus briefly, let us turn our attention to another tradition of more pernicious tendency, viz: that *the sinner has not power as a moral agent to repent, or do anything good*. There are probably, very few sentiments that have produced more fatal consequences than this. It has been one of quite extensive prevalence. Wherever it has been believed it has to a great extent blunted the edge of divine truth, and made of none effect the most plain and positive commands of God. And how could it be expected to exert a better influence. For just tell the sinner that he is unable to repent, and submit to God and love him, and if he believe you, he is at once quieted well nigh beyond the reach of further excitement. Commanded as he may be by the living God, his Creator and Judge, to repent and love and obey him, he is impenetrably shielded from the force of the command, for he has no power to do what God requires. When he is told, furthermore, as we have already seen, that God, for various reasons, prefers his disobedience and confirmed impenitence and ruin, to his obedience and salvation, he is led of course to suppose that God has other intentions to answer by

his commands than to secure his obedience. Thus he sleeps on in sin. And it is only when conscience, doing in some measure its office, and his consciousness and common sense coming in to its aid, unite in setting aside the perverted decisions of a perverse heart, and assure him that he is a free agent, and capable of obedience to God's commands, it is only then, that he is brought to consideration, and to tremble in view of the just displeasure of God, and to cry out with the solicitude of one who feels himself in peril, "What shall I do to be saved?" And that sinners have ever been converted where such sentiments have been believed, is no doubt owing to the fact, that conscience and their better judgment have got the better of the influence of their theology, and made them feel that God's commands were just, for they were addressed to beings who could obey them—that they were guilty in their disobedience, and must submit to God in the way of his appointment or perish.

Now who soberly believes such an opinion as that sinners have no ability to obey God's commands? Who can believe it and entertain any correct views of the perfections of God? A holy God commanding, with every variety of utterance, as though determined on being understood, commanding that men repent and love him, and showing the sincerity and the earnestness of his feelings that they yield the demanded obedience, by annexing to his commands the highest possible sanctions which God can execute, and yet is it true that they have no power to obey Him! Must they wait for Him to do something, which shall give them the power, before they can yield the obedience demanded! No man can for a moment, look at the commands that are addressed to the sinner, and consider the perfections of the Being who has addressed them, and believe that he has no power to obey Him. For one of two things is true: and every mind sees it. Either man has power to obey, or God is unjust in commanding him. One side or the other of this alternative must be adopted.

Nor need we be in a moment's suspense which side to adopt, if we look at the import of the command addressed to him: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." This is one of the two commands which summarily comprise the whole duty of man. What is its import? It does not say love the Lord thy God with the powers of an *angel* or of any other being; but with all *thy* heart, and with all *thy* soul, with all *thy* strength, and with all *thy* mind; i. e. exercise this affection in the purest and highest degree of which *you* are capable. In plain language, love Him as well as you can. And *cannot* the sinner love God *as well as he can*? The question is answered by asking. And why should we hesitate in expressing our dissent from the theory, that the sinner has not power to love God, or repent, or obey any Divine command.—Nor need we look even so far as this to see the falsity of this theory. We need only look at the capabilities of obedience, in the same being before and after regeneration. What new powers are ever communicated to any man for

obedience to God, by this change of heart or will? We appeal to the consciousness of any man who has been the subject of this change. Of what new powers, we ask, are you now possessed to obey God's commands that you did not possess before regeneration? Are you conscious of possessing any new faculties? Are you conscious of possessing any thing new, but a new disposition—a new heart—a different will? Do you not know that before the change you had power to obey any command that God addressed to you? Do you believe that if God had called you into judgment before that change, that the thought would have entered your mind to plead before him in self-defense that you had not power to obey him? From whatever point of view we look at the opinion that sinners cannot obey God's commands, we discover its falsity. A sinner has just as much power to obey God as a saint. Let sinners be for once brought under the influence of a settled conviction of this truth, then let them see how they have all their lives disobeyed the commands of the benevolent God, with every power and every inducement to obedience, and then if ever will they begin to feel guilt. Then show them that such is their depravity—so perverse is their disposition—so determined are they upon forbidden indulgence, that they never will submit to God without his subduing Spirit, and that by this perverseness they cast themselves entirely on his sovereign mercy, and rest entirely the question with Him, whether they shall ever receive the influence of his Spirit, and be brought to repentance and salvation, and then if ever will they tremble and never rest till they yield themselves to Christ and rest in the everlasting arms. Not until the false theory we are opposing can be torn away from the embrace of the sinner, can the naked point of the sword of the Spirit enter his soul; and the renewing, saving influence of the gospel of salvation bring the hearts of men into subjection to its pure and peaceful control.

Another sentiment, as far aside from the truth as the foregoing, and not much surpassed by it in the amount of its pernicious influence, is that *the unregenerate must pray, and use the other means of grace with unholy hearts, as the means of their conversion*. They are told of course, at the same time, and in this they are told the truth, that their prayers are an abomination in the sight of God. That every thing they do while in an unregenerate state is sinful and displeasing to God. Yet they are told that they must repeat, and continue to repeat these wicked services as the means of their conversion. In other words, they must do evil that good may come. Now what palpable inconsistency is here. What is the reason, my hearers, that men have seemed so determined entirely to dismiss their common sense in matters of religion, and run into a multitude of strange absurdities? What is the dictate of common sense on the subject? What would you say to your child in a similar case? He has been long in a course of disobedience and opposition to your will; and now begins to feel the need of effecting a reconciliation; and how shall he be told to obtain it? To go to you with his unhumbled heart, with no emotions of penitence, with the same spirit

of disobedience, and in that state of heart to ask your forgiveness? Would any parent think of requiring such a heartless petition from his child, or accept it, if it were a hundred times repeated? Would he not look for some symptoms of penitence, and some confessions of guilt made in sincerity, and some promises, hearty and sincere of new obedience, before he listened to his petitions for pardon? The matter is a plain one. Then why not deal thus with inquiring sinners; and tell them as the first thing to be done, to submit to God's righteous and benevolent will; to give up their opposition; and with penitence and humble confession and resolutions of obedience, lift up the cry to God for mercy: and not for days and weeks and months, with hearts rankling with enmity against a holy God, repeat their wicked prayers and services, with the vain hope that by so doing He will be induced to show them favor.

Another of these traditions which has long disfigured the system of those esteemed orthodox, respects the kind of agency which the Holy Spirit exerts in the work of regeneration: importing that *it is an immediate act of Almighty power upon the heart of the sinner in which he is entirely passive: and which is absolutely necessary to capacitate him to be affected by truth.* Now against such a notion as this we have several strong reasons, for urging our dissent; some two or three of which I will mention. The first is this: With what semblance of propriety does God command sinners to give heed to his truth, be moved by its influence, and yield obedience to his precepts, if it be first necessary for Him, by his Spirit, to exert his almighty power upon the sinner's heart, to capacitate him for being affected by the truth? With just as much propriety might you command the services of your child, while he is bound hand and foot, without the power of relieving himself. At the first glance, therefore, we find that they who advocate this theory dishonor God.

In the second place, it may be alledged against it, that it supposes a kind of agency which the sinner cannot resist: and nothing is more plainly taught in scripture than that the agency which the Spirit *does* exert upon the heart of the sinner, whatever it may be, *is* resisted. "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye," said the martyr Stephen to his murderers. Furthermore, how frequently are men urged in the scriptures not to resist the Holy Ghost: "Quench not the Spirit:" "Grieve not the Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Now if the agency which the Spirit exerts be that of irresistible power, we can see no good reason for all these scriptural representations; and why should the sinner be accused of the guilt of resisting this influence, and warned not to do it, if it be irresistible?

But we urge in the third place, as a stronger objection still, the positive declarations of scripture, that the Spirit of God converts men through the truth. Such a passage is this: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth:" and this; "Being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God." The word of God is elsewhere called the sword of the Spirit: the instrument by which He subdues the opposition of the sinner, and

brings him in humble submission at the feet of the Savior to plead for forgiveness.

Without urging other considerations against the theory before us, we leave it for every one to decide for himself, whether the Holy Spirit converts men by an immediate act of almighty power in which they are passive, and which they cannot resist, or whether he comes to them as rational and susceptible beings, the subjects of law and government, and by motives drawn from God's word, and an influence adapted to their natures and conditions, brings them to conviction of sin, and to submission to God. We leave it to be decided by every one for himself, whether the man, who, with such reasons as the foregoing, expresses his dissent from the theory we are considering, deserves to be denounced as a bold speculator and blasphemer.

We hasten to a brief consideration of another of these traditions of men, to wit, that *Christians, in this life, cannot be very holy*. It is expressed in these words by the Westminster assembly of divines ; "No mere man since the fall, has been able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word and deed." The sentiment of the last clause, that every man *does* break them daily, is no doubt, according to truth. But, in our apprehension, nothing is further from the truth, than the sentiment that he has not been able to keep them. Where in the whole of God's revelation is it said that men are not able to keep his commands ? Where in the whole of God's administration over men has he treated them as though they could not ? Rather is not the whole word of God, and all his treatment of men founded upon the assumption of the fact that they are capacitated for obedience ; and as such are addressed with the commands of their Creator and Judge ? Moreover we find specific precepts from God, requiring the very perfection of character of which we are speaking. "Be ye holy, for I am holy." "Be ye perfect, even as your father in heaven is perfect."

Nor need we turn a single step either to the right hand or to the left for evidence to show the incorrectness of this theory. We have it in the bosom of every man : and it were quite sufficient to appeal to the bosoms of men ; and safe to rest the decision of the question there. We lodge the appeal with any man, and ask him whether in every instance of conduct in which he has done wrong, he might not have done right ? Whether if he were arraigned before God's tribunal, and charged with guilt and condemned, he would think of pleading in self-defense that in any, even a single instance of transgression, he had not power to obey ; whether he was laid under any necessity to sin ? And the decision which every man has passed on the subject, we venture to affirm, is in direct opposition to the opinion that men are unable to keep the commandments of God ; and proves that it is a mere human opinion, and not the testimony of God.

But I ought here, in passing, as I have made occasional reference to the Catechism, to guard my hearers from misapprehending my

sentiments with regard to it, for they have been formerly misrepresented, and may be again. I therefore say, once for all, that I regard it in general as a most excellent compend of divinity ; in accordance with the pure doctrines of the Bible. There are nine tenths of it, and perhaps ninety-nine hundredths to which I see no objection ; with which I most fully concur. It is, however, a human compilation : the work of fallible men : and we are to use our own reason certainly in deciding whether this or that part of it be according to truth. Its style is, however, much better adapted to the capacities of parents than of children. And it were well if it were not so generally dismissed from the mind as of no further use the moment that childhood is past.

With a rapid glance at one other false sentiment which has gained some currency, I must close this discourse. It is this ; *Whether Christians shall be revived and sinners awakened, depends on God's sovereignty ; and they must quietly wait for his blessing.* Many seem to view their dependence in this matter, (and it is to *this* view of it that we object) very much in the same light that they do their dependence on God for rain, or any gift of his providence. If God in his mercy shall pass this way with the cloud of Divine influence and cause it to descend upon us, we shall be revived and sinners will be converted. But if in his holy sovereignty he pass by us, and leave us ; he is just in so doing ; we have no ground of complaining ; we must submit to his dispensation, and patiently wait till in mercy he visit us. Such language as this is heard from the lips of God's professing people in cases not a few. And why should they not entertain this sentiment ? It is only a legitimate inference from their false theories which we have examined ; and it must stand or fall with them. If Christians in this life cannot be very good ; and if the unregenerate have no power to do good at all ; if regeneration is the effect of an immediate act of almighty power on the heart, in which the sinner is passive ; and if, in a word, the whole subject of religion is a mere fatality, and all the movements of it the mere movings of irresistible power, why we must expect just such inferences from these sentiments as the one under consideration. Man is a mere pitiable object : bound in the strong cords of an invincible fatality ; and waiting, and patiently waiting for God to release him. But where in the whole of God's revelation to men shall we find any thing that gives license to such sentiments as these ? Where is it said, or even obscurely intimated, that Christians must wait, in the sense we have considered, for God to revive them ; or that sinners must wait in impotence for God to awaken and convert them ?

Now in opposition to all this notion of fatality about the subject of religion, how freely, and withal how invitingly, does God present salvation—life eternal, to every dying man. “Whosoever *will*, let him take of the waters of life freely.” And who is there, I ask, that cannot if he will ; yea more, who is there that *cannot* if he *will not*, take and drink and live forever ? In all my exhibitions of divine truth, I feel constrained, such are my views of its clear import,

to tell the sinner, that God has offered him a free salvation ; and that it is his fault, and his alone if he shall finally perish. I feel bound, in justice to the truth, and to the God who has published it, to endeavor to throw off the reproach which men have cast on God by making Him the author or the abettor of sin. I feel bound, taking the word of God for my guide, to tell man that his guilt is all his own ; and that it is in consequence of none of God's doings or designings that he is brought under its curse. I would make the humble endeavor to tear from the heart of the sinner every false covering, and expose him naked and defenseless to the sword of the Almighty. I would remove from under him every false and fatal dependence, and press him down with the weight of God's violated law, in the full measure of its righteous authority. O let God have his rightful seat, on his throne of benevolence, dispensing his gracious favors to the subjects of his universal kingdom ; with paternal kindness urging them to be happy, and radiant with the glories which beam from his acts of beneficence. And let guilty man ever be debased, where his voluntary depravity has brought him ; the self-made victim of the evils he suffers, and too depraved to lift up one humble, sincere petition for salvation.

My object in this discourse is two-fold—to defend the truth for its own sake, and to give my people a particular understanding of the grounds of controversy in the churches of the present day. The charge of heresy, of defection from the faith has been for some time, as you know, made against the Instructors in Theology in the Seminary in this vicinity, and against their disciples, of whom I claim the honor of being one. And certain men in our churches, with the design of doing God's service, I would hope, have very industriously employed themselves in exciting suspicions, and in making it seem that we are unsound in the faith : that we teach doctrines that are not according to godliness ; and that we refuse to teach those that are. With regard to all this I have only to say, that the subjects to which I have adverted in this discourse are those upon which we are condemned. And what appears to be our crime ? Why when others, in their discussions have run into speculations and framed theories which we deem contrary to Scripture, dishonorable to God, and evil in their tendency, we have not dared to follow them ; and have ventured to suggest that possibly their theories are not founded in truth. This is the amount of our offending. If we have offended further than this, we would hope to be convicted of error before we are condemned. Verily, my hearers, it seems that *we* are the men to sound an alarm of evil, if there is cause for alarm. In thus expressing our dissent from their opinions, we have, we acknowledge, dissented from the opinions of some good men ; but whether we have departed from the faith once delivered to the saints, or come nearer to it, we leave for you to judge. When we are thus arraigned before the tribunal of the public, and the eye of suspicion is turned upon us, and the confidence of the public in the soundness of our faith is weakened, and our usefulness of course diminished, we owe it to the cause of truth, we owe it to those over

whom we are set as teachers, we owe it to ourselves, to demand that we be *convicted* of error, and convicted by the *Bible*, before we are *condemned*. Certainly we may claim this common privilege ; and the judgment of candid men will grant it. This is all we ask or wish in the matter. With the *Bible* will we endeavor to defend our sentiments : and by this standard alone, and not by the *traditions of men*, we claim the right of being judged. And whoever may be in the right, or whoever in the wrong, let the *truth* prevail : and this is our consolation, brethren, that it will prevail.



No 1
ON COMING UNWORTHILY TO THE LORD'S SUPPER.

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED IN THE SOUTH PARISH OF ANDOVER,

OCTOBER 28, 1827.

BY JAMES MURDOCK, D.D.

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Published at the request of the hearers.

ANDOVER:

FLAGG AND GOULD, PRINTERS.

1827.

Rev James Murdock D.D.
died in Columbus Miss 10th Aug
1856 aged 80

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following discourse was composed for a sacramental occasion in the Theological Seminary, where it has been twice delivered from the pulpit. During the last two or three years, many of the students have desired to peruse the manuscript; and at one time, they as a body requested its publication. On its being pronounced before the people lately under the care of Dr. Edwards, more than fifty members of the parish came forward the next day with a liberal subscription, and requested that the sermon might be printed. Such is the history of the sermon and of the causes leading to its publication.

SERMON.

1 COR. XI. 29.

HE THAT EATETH AND DRINKETH UNWORTHILY, EATETH AND DRINKETH *DAMNATION* TO HIMSELF, NOT DISCERNING THE LORD'S BODY.

THE history of the opinions and practice of professed Christians, in regard to the Lord's Supper, contains an account of gross *superstitions* on the one hand, and of irreverent *profanations* of the ordinance on the other. The Corinthians, even in the Apostles' days, *profaned* the ordinance, by observing it, much as their heathen neighbours observed their idolatrous feasts. A large part of the Egyptians, likewise, made the Lord's Supper an appendage to a common banquet.¹ On the contrary, some of the Gnostics, like the modern Quakers, did not observe this ordinance at all.² In the Catholic church many *superstitious* rites, borrowed from paganism, were at an early period joined with it. At length, in the hands of the Papists it became totally unlike the holy ordinance which Christ instituted. Both its form and its spirit or import were changed. It was no longer a *sacred supper*,

¹ Socrates Scholast. Eccles. Hist. L. V. c. 22.

² Ignatius, Epistle to the Smyrnians, § VII. with the note of Cotelier.

observed in *remembrance* of Christ ; but the solemn adoration of a wafer, considered as being the real body of Christ, offered afresh as a sacrifice to God. Real *merit* was also ascribed to the mere ceremony of this imaginary sacrifice. The Protestants have from the beginning, discarded the idea of a literal sacrifice : yet they have too generally ascribed to the ordinance, a mysterious efficacy upon the soul of the communicant ; and of course have regarded it with an awe too nearly resembling that of the Papists. Many a trembling saint has been afraid to approach it, lest coming unworthily, he should seal his own DAMNATION. Others, from a belief that this ordinance was intended only for the most eminent saints, or for such as were certain that they were born again, have quieted their consciences, while disobeying a command which Christ addressed to all his followers : “ Do this, in remembrance of me.” It was an apprehension of a superior sanctity in this ordinance, beyond that of Baptism, which at one period led most of the New England churches to adopt two covenants, and to divide their members into two classes, such as observed only Baptism, and such as came to both ordinances. On the other hand, some churches in America as well as Europe, admit all the members of the congregation to this holy ordinance. By many it is regarded as a mere ceremony ; and some do not scruple to attend on it occasionally, as a legal qualification for public office.

Among the declarations in the Bible, which have most embarrassed the pious, the text has, I apprehend, the most frequently and the most unreasonably burdened the consciences of the humble disciples of Christ. I therefore design to investigate, and as far as I can to ascertain, its true meaning.

“He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.”

Two inquiries arise; viz.

I. What is it, to “eat and drink *unworthily*?”

II. In what sense, will a person thereby “*eat and drink damnation to himself*?”

To answer the *first* inquiry, or to ascertain what it is to “eat and drink unworthily,” we may either consider the *nature* and *design* of this ordinance; or we may inquire into that *abuse* of it by the Corinthians, which drew from an Apostle the declaration in the text.

When we consider the *nature* and *design* of the ordinance, we find it to be *a memorial of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ*. Of this we have clear evidence in the declarations of the Saviour himself. When he presented the bread, he said: “Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: *this do in remembrance of me.*” And when he presented the cup, he said: “This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do, as oft as ye drink it, in *remembrance of me.* For as often as

ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, *ye do shew the Lord's death* till he come." ¹

Jesus Christ is that "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." "His blood cleanseth us from all sin." And "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." ² Thus the death of Christ is the corner stone of the whole scheme of salvation. It is this, which makes Heaven propitious to us. It is this procures for us all spiritual blessings. Without this, the whole plan of the Gospel would fall to the ground, and all our hopes of salvation become vain.

Now if the Lord's Supper is the constituted *memorial* of this all-important sacrifice, it is obvious, that to observe the ordinance in a suitable manner, we must *understand* the object and the efficacy of this great sacrifice: that is, we must understand the leading doctrines of the Gospel in regard to it, so that we may perceive the import of the ordinance, or, in the language of the context, may "discern the Lord's body." And we must not only *understand* these doctrines, but we must *believe* them: that is, we must believe, that all men are sinners,—that Christ died to redeem them,—and that his death is efficacious to this end. In other words, we must be real and intelligent believers in the Christian religion.

¹ Context, verses 24—26. Compare Luke 22: 19, 20.

² John 1: 29. 1 John 1: 7. Acts 4: 12.

Thus much necessarily follows from the fact that this ordinance is the instituted *memorial* of the crucifixion. For no one can worthily observe any memorial whatever, unless he knows of what it is the memorial, or what it represents :—nor, unless he believes the things it represents to be realities. The paschal supper, for example, was a memorial of the slaughter of the first born in Egypt.¹ But how could any Jew observe that ordinance properly, without knowing to what it referred ?—and without believing too, that God did in fact pass by the houses of the Israelites, and slay all the first born of the Egyptians ?

Again: the Lord's Supper is not only the memorial of Christ's death, but has likewise the nature of *a feast upon a sacrifice*. This may need some explanation.—In all countries where sacrifices have been offered, whether Jewish or pagan, and particularly in the East, every sacrifice was followed by a feast, in which more or less of the sacrifice or consecrated thing was eaten by the offerer and his friends. And this religious act was regarded as holding intimate and friendly intercourse with the Deity himself. It was considered as a sitting and eating at the same table with him : and of course, agreeably to Oriental views, as a sacred pledge of inviolable union and friendship. For to this day, no oath is so binding upon an Arab

¹ Exod. 12: 26, 27.

or western Asiatic, as the simple act of eating with another.

Now the Eucharist is called "the Lord's *Supper*;" and the table at which it is eaten, "the Lord's *Table*." And the bread and the wine, though not literally a sacrifice, are the symbols of one, or the representatives of that body and that blood which were made a sacrifice for our sins. Hence the sacred Supper *represents* a feast upon a sacrifice: and by eating of it, we profess to eat at the same table with the Lord himself; or, agreeably to Oriental customs, we professedly enter into a solemn covenant with Christ,—a covenant of mutual and inviolable friendship.

That the Apostle viewed the Lord's Supper in this light, is manifest from 1 Cor. 10: 18—21. where he says: "Are not they which eat of the sacrifices, *partakers of the altar*? What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to devils and not to God: and I would not that ye should have *fellowship with devils*. Ye cannot drink the *cup of the Lord*, and the *cup of devils*: ye cannot be partakers of the *Lord's table*, and of the *table of devils*." Here, to sit at the Lord's table, is considered as holding *fellowship with Christ*, as *his* acknowledged friends and worshippers; just as to sit at the table of demons, is to hold fellowship with *them*, as their friends and wor-

shippers. The Lord's Supper, therefore, is truly a feast upon a sacrifice;—as really so, as the idolatrous feasts among the pagans. And of course, to attend it, implies that we enter into a solemn covenant with Christ, to be his friends and followers.¹

Again: in both the Jewish and the pagan feasts upon sacrifices, all the persons who united in partaking of the consecrated food, not only participated in an act of homage to the Deity, but they professed themselves *friends to each other*. To eat together, among Asiatics, was always a token of friendship; but especially, to eat together at a consecrated table. Hence, from the nature of the act, as well as from the command of Christ requiring his disciples to love one another, (which command of his Lord, every communicant binds himself to obey,)—to sit together at the sacramental table, is a profession of mutual love and friendship among the communicants. This principle also, is recognized in the chapter before the text.² “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the *communion of the blood* of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the *communion of the body* of Christ? For we, being many, are *one bread*, and *one body*; for we are *all partakers of that one bread*.”

From the view now taken of this ordinance, as

¹ See Dr. Cudworth's “Discourse concerning the True Notion of the Lord's Supper;” subjoined to his “Intellectual System of the Universe,” Vol. II. London, 1743. 4to.

² Verses 16, 17.

a *memorial* of Christ crucified,—as a *feast upon a sacrifice*, and as the *communion* of Christians ; we may learn distinctly, what is implied in *worthily* partaking of it. It implies a good understanding of the design and the efficacy of Christ's death,—a cordial belief of the fundamental truths of the Gospel,—an actual reception of Christ, as our Saviour,—a state of reconciliation to God by him,—a present, renewed consecration of ourselves to Christ as his followers,—and an acknowledgment of those who come with us to this ordinance, as our brethren in the Lord, whom we esteem and love as fellow disciples.

And if to come to the Lord's table with such views and such feelings, is *worthy* communion ; then to come without such views and feelings,—and much more, to come with views and feelings contrary to these,—is *unworthy* communion.

You will not expect me to describe all the various ways in which we may come unworthily to the Lord's Table. In this case, as in many others, the right way is but *one* ; the deviating paths are numerous. But it may be proper to observe, that if such views and such feelings, as have now been described, are essential in a worthy approach to the Lord's Table ; and if to come without these views and feelings, or with other and contrary ones, be eating and drinking unworthily ; then there may be various *degrees* of worthy communion, according to the perfection of our right views and feel-

ings, and likewise various degrees of unworthy communion, according to the measure in which our views and feelings are wrong.

We have now considered, what answer to our first inquiry may be derived from the *nature* and *design* of this ordinance. The other method of answering the same inquiry, was to consider that *abuse* of the ordinance, by the Corinthians, which drew from an Apostle this solemn warning against unworthy communion.

The conduct of the Corinthians at the Lord's Table, is thus described in the context: "When ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.—when *ye* come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper:"—that is, your coming together in this manner, is not worthy to be called eating the Lord's Supper. "For in eating, every one taketh before other, his own supper; and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say unto you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not." The Apostle then describes the original institution and the holy nature of this ordinance; and concludes by saying: "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation."¹

¹ Context, v. 18—22, 33, 34.

We learn from ecclesiastical history, that the early Christians celebrated this ordinance every Lord's day : and that they made use of the bread and wine, which the people voluntarily brought to the house of worship on those occasions. It appears also, that these contributions of food were intended not only for the sacramental supper, but likewise for those feasts of charity or love, which were observed at the same time, as well as for the relief of the poor, and the sustenance of the officers of the church. Now the Corinthians being divided into parties, and greatly wanting in Christian affection, when they assembled, they did not make a distribution of their offerings, nor wait for all to assemble, and perhaps not for any consecration of the elements ; but separating into little circles, or sitting here and there individually, they ate and drank of their own offerings in a very unbecoming and unchristian manner. Some ate and drank abundantly, making an ostentatious display of their wealth and luxury ; while others either shared nothing, or received only the refuse of the tables of the rich. Such was *that abuse* of this ordinance, which occasioned the remarks in the text on unworthy communion.

It appears therefore, that the censurable conduct which Paul had particularly in view when he wrote the text, was this indecent, factious, irreverent behavior at the Lord's table ;—a conduct, in which the reference of the ordinance to the crucifixion of

Christ was overlooked, or regarded with indifference; and in which there was a display of pride and luxurious living, and a total disregard to brotherly love, if not likewise to every precept and promise of the Gospel.

Such conduct at the Lord's Table, may well shock *our* feelings; for we have never witnessed any thing like it. But let it not cause us to rise too much, in our own estimation. Those unhappy Corinthians were recent converts from paganism; they were ignorant; and they lived in times of ignorance, and of comparative barbarism; all around them, even the most decent and honourable, manifested precisely the same spirit in their most solemn acts of worship. Had they lived in our age, they could not easily have fallen into such indecencies. And if *we* are more decorous in our approaches to the Lord's Table, may not our cold formality, our want of spiritual views and feelings, render our attendance on the ordinance, as offensive to the heart-searching God, as theirs was!

Our *second* inquiry, on the text, is; in what sense, does an unworthy communicant "eat and drink *damnation* to himself?"

I have already remarked, that there may be various *degrees* of unworthy communion, according as our views and feelings at this ordinance are more or less unsuitable to the solemnity of the occasion. Yet, according to our translation, Paul asserts universally, or without any exception, that

whoever eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks *damnation* to himself. This language, to a modern English ear, conveys the terrific idea, that to eat and drink unworthily, in any degree whatever, is an unpardonable sin;—a sin which will infallibly lead to the perdition of the soul. But such, most certainly, was not the Apostle's meaning. He intended no more than, that such communion, instead of being acceptable to God and securing his blessing, is offensive to him, and will draw down rebukes and chastisements on the head of the communicant. This is evinced by the following arguments.

First ; Paul did not cease to regard the Corinthians as true Christians and heirs of salvation, notwithstanding he charges them with the crime of unworthy communion. For he thus addresses them, in this very epistle: "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge;—so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." And in a subsequent chapter, he says: "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's;

and Christ is God's."¹ The persons to whom Paul addressed such language, most certainly could not, in his estimation, have sealed their eternal damnation. And of course, when he charged them with profaning the Lord's Supper, he did not suppose them guilty of an unpardonable sin.

Secondly; the context affords proof, that to eat and drink damnation here means nothing more, than to draw down divine *judgments* rather than blessings. For in the 17th verse, it is described as a "coming together, *not for the better*, but *for the worse*." And still more explicit are the verses which follow the text. Having said, that he who eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, the Apostle proceeds to say, in the 30th verse: "For this cause many are *weak and sickly* among you; and many sleep." Here we have the Apostle's own testimony, that the judgments which came on the Corinthians, for the sin of eating and drinking at the Lord's Table unworthily, were altogether of a *temporal* nature; namely, *sickness* and *mortality* among the brethren. And these judgments, it is expressly declared, were intended for the *good* of the offenders;—the object of them was, to *prevent* their being finally condemned with the ungodly: v. 31, 32. "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But *when we are judged, we are chastened of*

¹ 1 Cor. 1: 4—8. 3: 21—23. See also 1 Cor. 4: 14, 15. 6: 11. 10: 12—15. 12: 27. and 2 Cor. 1: 7. 3: 2, 3. 7: 14—16. 13: 11—14.

the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

Yet it must not be inferred from the case of the Corinthians, that such temporal judgments as sickness and premature death, are the *only* judgments which Heaven inflicts on profaners of this ordinance. His own children, God can chastise in various ways, as he may see fit; and the irreligious who abuse this ordinance, will doubtless find this to be one among those sins for which the ungodly will be condemned at the day of judgment.

Thirdly; neither the original Greek of the text, nor the English translation, as it would be understood in the age in which it was written, conveyed the idea of any thing more, than of eating and drinking *judgment*; that is, of incurring rebuke or punishment from God.

That the Greek word, κρίμα, expresses no more than this, every person acquainted with the Greek language, will admit: and others may perhaps be satisfied, when informed, that this very word is translated *judgment*, in the following passages: Matt. 7: 2. "With what *judgment* ye judge, ye shall be judged." John 9: 39. "And Jesus said, For *judgment* I am come into this world: that they which see not, might see; and that they which see, might be made blind." Gal. 5: 10. "He that troubleth you shall bear his *judgment*, whosoever he be." 1 Peter 4: 17. "For the time is come that *judgment* must begin at the house of God: and if

it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God ?”

That our translators may have intended no more, by the word *damnation*, than simply *condemnation*, or divine judgment in general ; appears from their repeatedly using the word *damnation* in this very sense. Thus in reference to the crime of disobedience to civil rulers, they say : “ Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God : and they that resist, shall receive to themselves *damnation*.”¹ But surely, every instance of disobedience to civil rulers, is not followed infallibly by the loss of the soul. Here the word can mean, at farthest, no more than *condemnation*, or punishment at the hand of God. So in the first epistle to Timothy,² those widows, who being made deaconesses, afterwards disqualified themselves for the office by marrying, are represented by our translation as “ having *damnation*, because they have cast off their first faith.” The passage means only, that they have *condemnation*, or fall under the displeasure of God. Another passage in point, occurs in the epistle to the Romans, where in reference to the eating of meats consecrated to an idol, we read : “ He that doubteth, *is damned* if he eat, because he eateth not of faith : for whatsoever is not of faith, *is sin*.”³ This passage carries along with

¹ Rom. 13: 2.

² 1 Tim. 5: 12.

³ Rom. 14: 23. compare v. 20. “ It is evil to him that eateth with offence.”

it, its own explanation, shewing that to be *damned*, here means only in general to *commit sin*.

Thus it appears, we can have no assurance, that our translators, when they inserted the word *damnation* in the text, intended any thing more by it, than they do in other passages, where they certainly meant only *condemnation*, or judgment.

I will now close this investigation of the import of my text, by quoting the Paraphrase and Note of the pious Dr. Doddridge, which occur in his Family Expositor. His Paraphrase is: "*He that eateth and drinketh in an irreverent, profane and unworthy manner, must certainly displease and provoke God; so that it may truly be said, that he eateth and drinketh judgment to himself: he takes the readiest way to bring down the judgments of God upon him.*" The marginal Note is this: "I think it is the most unhappy mistake in all our *version* of the *Bible*, that the word *κρίμα*, is here rendered *damnation*. It has raised a dread in tender minds which has greatly obstructed the comfort and edification they might have received from this ordinance. The *apostle* afterwards says, *we are judged*, (that is, as he afterwards explains it, *we are corrected*,) *that we may not be condemned*; which plainly shows, the judgments spoken of might be fatherly chastisements. This sin, as sin, does indeed expose us to condemnation, should God be extreme to mark it, as an irreverent behaviour under *any other* ordinance does; but it is *superstition*

to set this at so vast a distance from all the rest, as many do.”¹

After this long discussion of the principal questions suggested by the text, my hearers will, I hope, acquiesce in the correctness of the following remarks.

1. This text ought not to deter *any real Christian*, who understands the import of the ordinance, and who wishes to show his grateful love to the Saviour, from coming to the Lord's Table. It does not hold up the terrific idea, that unworthy communion is an unpardonable sin. The Lord's table is not like the tangible mount, that burned with fire, whose top was enveloped in blackness and tempest, and from which issued thunders and voices so terrible that even good men exceedingly feared and quaked. This holy ordinance was not designed to be a fiery *ordeal*, through which none but the sinless can safely pass. It was intended for the edification, and not for the destruction of the frail followers of Christ. The person who is duly prepared for communion with his God and Saviour in *any* religious ordinance, is prepared not only for a safe, but for a profitable attendance on this. And mistakes and imperfections in regard to this ordinance, are no more hazardous to the soul, than mistakes and imperfections in regard to Baptism. It is a table which Christ has spread

¹ Similar views of the import of the text, are given by Scott, Macknight, Clark, Whitby, and by the great body of interpreters.

for *all* his humble followers ; and to which the meanest of them is made welcome. The consecrated bread and wine are nutritious aliment for every soul, that hungers and thirsts after righteousness.

Let no one therefore, who loves and honours Christ, be afraid to approach his table. The denunciation in the text was never intended to frighten any humble Christian from the sacred feast, and thus deprive him of the benefits of this precious ordinance.—Come, then, all ye that love the Saviour ; come ye to this soul-refreshing feast. The Lord himself invites you—nay commands you. If you love the great Redeemer,—if you are truly grateful for his mediation, and if you wish to make manifest before the world, your faith in christianity, and your adoring views of Christ your Saviour, he bids you welcome—always welcome to his table.

2. This text, though it does not teach, that unworthy communion will consign a person to inevitable perdition, yet may well deter all the grossly ignorant, the thoughtless, the unbelieving, and the whole body of the irreligious, from this holy ordinance. For, such persons will doubtless, eat and drink *judgment* to themselves, not discerning the Lord's body. The text clearly shews, that this ordinance was designed exclusively for *Christians* ;—for those who understand, believe, and take proper interest in the great truths of the Gospel. It was not instituted, like the ministry of the word, to be the means of converting the heathen, and of

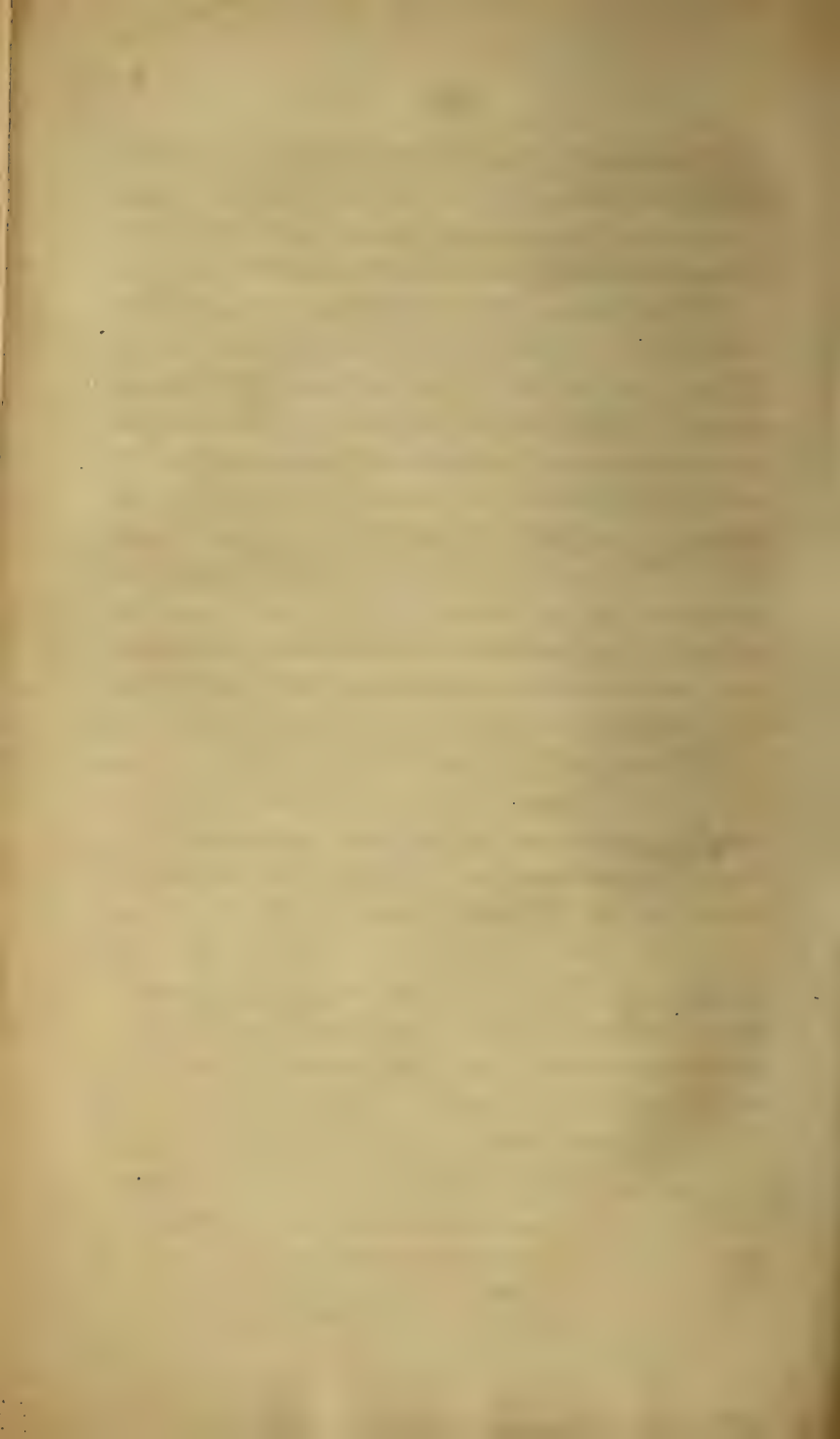
awakening and convincing thoughtless sinners in Christian lands; but for the edification of the *church*;—of those already enlightened and born again.

If therefore any of you, my dear hearers, are not fully convinced, that you are sinners before God, that you are in danger of everlasting perdition, and that Jesus Christ is your only Saviour;—or if you are still halting whether to accept his mediation, and to embrace and follow him as your Saviour; most evident it is, that you are such persons as have no right to sit down with the disciples of Christ at his table. This ordinance was not designed for persons of your character: and you cannot approach it with safety. You cannot expect to come to it, in your present state, without increasing your guilt,—without incurring divine displeasure.—How unhappy is your condition! You can have no friendly intercourse with Christ. You cannot come near his table. This delightful ordinance, which nourishes the faith and piety of others, offers no spiritual nourishment to you. While it furthers the salvation of others, it would but obstruct and hinder yours!

3. My Christian brethren, this text warns *us*, that it is not sufficient merely to be *Christians*, in order to come acceptably to this ordinance. We may be real Christians,—heirs of salvation; and yet eat and drink *judgment* to ourselves. The Corinthians did so. And their example, and the

rebukes it received, should be a warning to *us*. To come to this ordinance with advantage, we too must “examine” ourselves; and we must come prepared to contemplate, to admire, and to embrace anew the bleeding Saviour. All our Christian feelings must be in lively exercise. For, this ordinance is a memorial of Christ, a feast upon a sacrifice, a spiritual communion of Christians with their Lord and with one another. It does not operate mechanically on the soul. There is no mysterious, physical efficacy in the mere act of eating this sacred bread. The whole efficacy of the ordinance consists in the views it excites, and the feelings it awakens. If we come to it in such a frame of mind, as to have our Christian views and feelings excited, and purified, and invigorated; we shall be benefitted. If not,—the ordinance will do us no good. Nay, it will do us *harm*. It will increase our religious insensibility; it will grieve the Holy Spirit, by which we are sanctified; and it may induce a holy God to visit us with rebukes and chastisement.

Therefore, my Christian friends,—“Let a man *examine* himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh *judgment* to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.”



A

SERMON

ON THE

DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

By E. CORNELIUS,

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Published by request of the Church.

ANDOVER:

PRINTED BY FLAGG AND GOULD.

1826.

S E R M O N.



Ephesians II. 18.

FOR THROUGH HIM WE BOTH HAVE ACCESS BY ONE SPIRIT UNTO
THE FATHER.

IN examining the truths of revelation, it is important that our inquiries be conducted with candour and humility. The subjects treated of are so vast, and in many instances so much above the comprehension of the human mind, that our knowledge of them can be neither very extensive nor correct, unless we dismiss our prejudices, and rely simply on divine testimony. This is especially true when we undertake to investigate the deep things of God himself. “Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than hell; what canst thou know?” If ever men need supernatural aid it is when they enter upon this unmeasurable field of inquiry. It should excite our gratitude, that God has been pleased to grant us such aid, in the Scriptures of revealed truth. He

has there told us who he is, and what he requires. He has even disclosed important facts concerning the mode of his existence, and pointed out the manner in which he is to be approached and worshipped. Our duty is, to receive his instructions, not with the feelings of judges, but with the docility of learners. If we are told that God is a being of *infinite* knowledge, holiness, and justice, we must give full credit to the declaration, although we can neither comprehend the extent of such attributes, nor reconcile them with every event which occurs in his Providence. And so, if the Scriptures clearly inform us what honours are due to the only true God, and then direct us to render these honours to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, we must obey the direction with scrupulous exactness, whatever conclusions it may lead us to make concerning the *manner* in which God exists.

The verse which has been read naturally directs our attention to this important subject. The allusion which it makes to the Son, and to the Spirit, as well as to the Father, and the offices which it assigns to each in the work of salvation, will lead us to inquire what the Scriptures teach concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, and will give to the discussion a practical bearing. Every serious and conscientious person must desire to know what honours are due to the Supreme Being, and how they should be rendered. The doctrine of the Trinity is inseparable

arably connected with these inquiries. No subject, therefore, can be more immediately or deeply practical.

I am aware that the text, independently of its connexion with other passages of Scripture, does not fully establish the doctrine in question; but taking into consideration all which the sacred writings contain on the subject, it may properly be regarded as referring to that doctrine, and, consequently, as affording a suitable occasion for discussing it.

To render the subject more perspicuous my remarks will be made with reference to three particulars, viz.

I. What the doctrine of the Trinity is.

II. The proof of it.

III. The practical importance of it.

If the humble inquirer after truth can arrive at satisfactory conclusions on these points, he will possess what is most necessary to his faith and practice; and having this, he may safely leave other questions to be settled in a world of clearer light and more extensive knowledge.

I. I am to show what the doctrine of the Trinity is. In doing this, I remark, it is *not* that there are three supreme, independent, Gods. The language of the Bible, on this point, is such as no one can mistake. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is **ONE** Lord." After such a declaration, to say that there are, or can be, three independent Gods, would be to

contradict the highest testimony in the universe. Were this the doctrine of the Trinity, or were it a fair and manifest conclusion from it, no evidence could prove it to be true. It would carry its own refutation on the face of it. Those who receive the doctrine have no such view of it. They adopt no opinion which in their apprehension infringes, in the least, that grand article of the Divine Unity, which they hold to be the basis of all true religion.

Neither is it the doctrine of the Trinity, as commonly deduced from the Scriptures, that God merely acts in three essentially different ways, or in three prominent and peculiar relations—that when he manifests himself in one of these, he takes the title of Father; when he appears in a second, he calls himself Son; and when he is exhibited in a third, he styles himself Holy Spirit; just as when a human being sustains three offices, he may take different titles, and designate himself by one or other of them, according to the circumstances in which he acts. As the former statement contains *more* than is implied in the doctrine of the Trinity, so this contains *less*. The distinction which it makes between the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, is rather nominal than real, and falls far short of those personal descriptions which the Scriptures give of them.

I observe therefore, that the doctrine teaches the FACT, *That the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are the one, only living, and true God; and that*

there is in the Divine Nature, or Godhead, a foundation for such a distinction, as authorizes the separate application of the personal pronouns, I, thou, and he, to each of these names ; and requires divine attributes and honours to be distinctly ascribed to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as well as to the Father.

This the doctrine teaches *simply* as a fact ; to be received, or rejected, according to the nature and degree of the evidence which is brought in support of it. The reality of such a distinction in the Godhead is, however, as independent of any *explanation* which may be given of it, as the reality of God's existence is independent of any explanation, how he exists. The credibility of a fact does not necessarily depend upon the possibility of explaining it in a satisfactory manner, but on evidence. What philosopher of modern times doubts, that certain bodies possess the properties which are called magnetism and electricity ; or that all bodies possess what is called gravitation ? Yet what philosopher has been able to do more than to describe these attributes of matter, as facts ? The mind of Newton did not attempt any thing beyond this.

The Scriptures reveal many things as facts, which they do not undertake to explain. They tell us that God is eternal, omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent ; but what can we comprehend of things *infinite* in degree or duration ? They teach us also that God is a Spirit ; that he made all things from

nothing; that he will raise the dead; and bring every thought, feeling, and action into judgment—but what do we know of these things, except that they are realities? Yet they are as firmly believed and confided in, by all who receive the testimony of the Bible, as though they admitted a solution of every difficulty. So also may the doctrine of the Trinity be fully credited, though the fact which it asserts should remain forever unexplained. All that can reasonably be demanded is, that the terms in which it is expressed contain nothing *in itself* absurd, and that it have the testimony of the word of God for its support. That such is the case in regard to the statement which has been made, it will be my object to show.

II. I proceed therefore to exhibit the proof of the doctrine. I will first endeavour to show that the statement alleges nothing *in itself* absurd; and then that it is supported by the testimony of Scripture.

The absurdity usually alleged against the doctrine of the Trinity, and that to which all objections proceeding on the ground that it is *essentially* incredible may be reduced, is, that it teaches that *three* Gods are *one* God; which is saying that three and one are, *numerically*, the same.

Now if the language contained in the proposition be justly chargeable with such a contradiction, it must be, either, because it *asserts* that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are three Gods; or, because it

implies this. The first will not be pretended, since so far as mere declaration goes, it *asserts* the contrary. It declares that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the **ONE** only living and true God.—Neither does the statement *imply* that there are more Gods than one. Before such an allegation can be proved, it must be shown, either, that the proposition represents God as three, *in the same sense* in which he is represented as one; or that the distinction which it supposes in the Divine Nature is impossible. The former cannot be shown, because the statement represents God as three, in reference only to the distinction, *be it what it may*, which exists between the Father, Son, and Spirit; and as one, in reference to their union in the same Godhead; that is, it represents him as three, in *one* sense; and as one, in *another* sense. To assume the latter part of the alternative, relating to the impossibility of such a distinction as the statement asserts, would be taking for granted the main point in dispute, and is what no one can affirm, who does not presume to know all those distinctions of which the Divine Nature is capable. Besides, in order to prove that such a distinction is irreconcilable with the Divine Unity, the objector must show not only in what that distinction consists, but in what Divine Unity consists, and then that there is a contradiction between the two. But this no human intellect has done, or can do.

Viewed, therefore, in whatever light it may be, the doctrine, as it has been stated, contains nothing *in itself* contradictory or absurd. It simply asserts a fact concerning the mode of the Divine existence, which for any thing that appears in the declaration itself, may be true ; and leaves the reality of it to be shown, like that of thousands of other facts, by testimony. The way is now prepared to exhibit the evidence which the Scriptures afford of the truth of the doctrine. This I shall endeavor to present in the following propositions.

1. *The Scriptures mention certain characteristics by which God is known, and distinguished from all other beings ; and which he does not permit to be applied to any other than himself.*

If Jehovah is different from all other beings, it is plain that he must possess some things which are peculiar to himself ; and which being known, necessarily distinguish him from all others. If we examine the Scriptures, we shall find that the sacred writers have exhibited God with all this prominence and peculiarity ; designating him by titles, ascribing to him attributes and actions, and rendering him honours, which belong to no other being. A few quotations will show this in the clearest manner.

No one can doubt that the *epithets* used in the following passages belong only to the Supreme God. “ That all men may know, that thou, whose name alone is *Jehovah*, art the *Most High* over all the

earth.—This is eternal life, to know thee, *the only true God*.—The *Great*, the *Mighty God*, the *Lord of Hosts* is his name.—Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts, *I am the first, and I am the last.*"¹

Equally manifest is it, that the *attributes* which are mentioned, or implied, in the following citations, are intended to be understood as belonging to the only true God. "For thou, *EVEN THOU ONLY knowest the hearts* of all the children of men.—I the Lord *search the heart*, I try the reins, even to give to every man according to his ways.—God is greater than our heart and *knoweth all things*.—Can any one hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him, saith the Lord? *Do not I fill heaven and earth*, saith the Lord?—The Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, *I am the almighty God*.—The *eternal* God is thy refuge.—I am the Lord, *I change not.*"² In these passages omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, eternity, and immutability, are described as distinguishing attributes of Jehovah.

Creation is a work, which is uniformly represented in Scripture as belonging to God. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.—Thou, even thou, art Lord alone: thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host,

¹ Ps. 63: 18. John 17: 3. Jer. 32: 18, 19. Is. 44: 6.

² 1 Kings 8: 39. Jer. 17: 10. 33: 23, 24. 1 John 3: 20. Gen. 17: 1. Deut. 30: 27. Mal. 3: 6.

the earth and all things that are therein, the seas and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all.—*He that built all things is God.*” It is declared also, that the work of creation was executed by God *alone*, without the intervention of any helper or associate. “Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer *I am the Lord that maketh all things* ; that stretcheth forth the heavens *ALONE* ; that spreadeth abroad the earth *BY MYSELF*.” It is one method of describing false gods, to designate them as “gods which have *not* made the heavens and the earth.”¹ Of course he who did create them is the true God.

Other portions of Scripture mention it as the special prerogative of God to forgive sin, and to judge the world at the last day. He is exhibited also as the only being worthy of supreme love and confidence, and as the only lawful object of religious worship. The following citations may serve as examples. “I, even I, am he that *blotteth out thy transgressions.—God shall bring every work into judgment*, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.—So then every one of us shall give account of himself to *God*.—Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm blessed is the man that *trusteth in the Lord*, and whose hope the Lord is.—Fear God and give glory to him, and worship him that made heaven and

¹ Gen. 1 : 1. Neh. 9 : 6. Heb. 3 : 4. Is. 44 : 24. Jer. 10 : 11.

earth and the fountains of waters.—THOU SHALT WORSHIP NO OTHER GOD.”¹

Such is the language by which the true God is known and distinguished. Every one perceives that the being who can justly claim these titles, attributes, works, and worship, is, and must be, the supreme God, the Jehovah of the Scriptures. They are also what God himself assumes as his peculiar prerogatives, and forbids to be applied to any other being. In such explicit and solemn terms as these does he assert the rights of the Supreme Divinity. “I, even I am he; and *there is no God with me*.—I am God, and *there is none like me*.—I am the Lord, that is my name; and *my glory will I not give unto another*.—Thou shalt have no other Gods *before me*.”² But if it is true that Jehovah will not give, nor delegate the attributes and honours which belong to him and constitute his glory, to another; if there is no God *with* him, and none *like* him, in the universe, it follows, that the being who possesses these attributes and may claim these honours, is the only true God. Thus it appears that the Scriptures mention certain characteristics by which God is known and distinguished from all other beings; and which he does not permit to be applied to any other than himself. This is the first proposition.

¹ Is. 43 : 25. Ecc. 12 : 14. Rom. 14 : 12. Jer. 17 : 5, 7. Rev. 14 : 7. Ex. 34 : 14.

² Deut. 32 : 39. Is. 46 : 9, 42 : 8. Ex. 20 : 3.

2. *These same characteristics, which belong only to God, and are forbidden by him to be applied to any other, are ascribed in Scripture, by God himself, to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.*

That this is true in regard to the Father, no one can have any doubt. I shall endeavour to show that it is true also of the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The limits of a discourse permit the introduction of but few passages on each of these branches of the subject. I shall select such as are most obvious in their import, and which it is believed will bear the strictest examination.

Several of the distinguishing *names and titles* of God, are applied to Christ in the following passages, in the same unqualified manner in which we have before seen that they are applied to Jehovah. “Whose are the Fathers; and of whom, as concerning the flesh, *Christ came, who is over all God blessed forever.*—And we are in him that is true, even in his son *Jesus Christ; this (or he¹) is the true God and eternal life.*” The writer of the Apocalypse represents Christ as saying “I am Alpha and Omega, *the first and the last.*” The prophet Isaiah says “I saw also Jehovah sitting upon a throne high and

¹ Dr. Doddridge, one of the most candid and judicious of critics, and who translates the Greek pronoun in this manner, says of this passage; “It is an argument of the Deity of Christ, which almost all those who have wrote in its defence have urged, and which I think none who have opposed it, have so much as appeared to answer.” *Expositor in loc.* See also Stuart’s *Letters to Channing*, 3d Ed. p. 83.

lifted up, and his train filled the temple ;” yet the evangelist John, speaking of Christ, refers to this vision and observes ; “ These things said Esaias, when he saw his (Christ’s) glory, and spake of him.” Christ is therefore Jehovah, whom the prophet saw.¹

In the passages which follow, the distinguishing *attributes* of God are ascribed to Christ in the same unqualified manner. “ *In the beginning* (from eternity) was the Word.—I am alpha and omega, *the beginning and the end*.—And, thou, Lord, (addressed to Christ) in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands : they shall perish, but thou remainest ; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment ; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them and they shall be changed ; *but thou art the same*, and thy years shall not fail.—All the churches shall know that I AM HE *which searcheth the reins and the hearts*.—As the Father *knoweth* me, even so *know* I the Father.”—Of Christ also it is said that “ he shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby *he is able even to subdue all things to himself*.” It was Jesus who assured his disciples that “ where two or three are gathered together in my name, *there am I in the midst of them* ;” and to his ministers he has said, “ *Lo I am with you alway*, even to the end of the

¹ Rom. 11: 5. 1 John 5: 20. Rev. 1: 11. Is. 6: 1 compared with John 12: 41.

world.”¹ It can scarcely be necessary to remark, that the attributes which are here ascribed to Christ are the same, and for the most part are expressed in the same language, with those which we have before seen to be descriptive of the only true Jehovah.

Creation, which is so often claimed in the Scriptures as the work of God *alone*, is ascribed to Christ in the most direct and positive terms, as the following quotations will show. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. *All things were made by him ; and without him was not any thing made which was made.—The world was made by him.*” In the following passages he is declared to be the Preserver, and Upholder, as well as the Creator, of the universe. “For by him (i. e. Christ) were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created BY him and FOR him, and he is BEFORE all things, *and by him all things consist.*—Who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, and *upholding all things by the word of his power*, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”² What stronger terms is it possible to use, than are here employed in descri-

¹ John 1 : 1. Rev. 22 : 13. Heb. 1 : 10—12. Rev. 2 : 23. John 10 : 15. Phil. 3 : 21. Matt. 18 : 20, 28 : 20.

² John 1 : 1, 2, 10. Col. 1 : 16, 17. Heb. 1 : 3.

bing the creative and preserving power of Christ? Who would hesitate a moment to understand them of the Supreme Jehovah, if they were unconnected with the name of Christ? What then should hinder them from being so understood now that they are inseparably joined to his name? Certainly, if Christ is *before* all things, if all things in the universe were *created* by him, and are upheld by him, there must be a sense in which he is not himself a *creature*; and if he is not created, who else can he be but the uncreated God? How irreconcilable are such passages as these with every theory which reduces the Lord Jesus Christ to the condition of a dependent being! Will those, who contend that he had no existence till he appeared on earth, show us how he could create the world four thousand years before he was born; or, with what propriety it could be said that "*without him* was not any thing made which was made," when, as they at the same time tell us, nothing was made *by him*?

To forgive sin is a divine prerogative which was claimed and exercised by Jesus Christ. To the sick of the palsy he said, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee;"¹ and when the Jews accused him of blasphemy for pretending to such divine authority, he replied by asserting his power to forgive sin.

To Christ also it belongs to raise the dead, and

¹ Matth. 9: 2—6.

judge the world at the last day. "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.—For we must all appear before the *judgment seat of Christ*, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or whether it be bad."¹

There are, in short, no acts of confidence and homage greater than those which the Scriptures frequently represent as being rendered to Christ. "I can do all things *through Christ which strengtheneth me*.—Whosoever believeth (i. e. trusteth) in him shall not be ashamed.—Then Peter said, silver and gold have I none ; but such as I have, give I thee : *in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth*, rise up and walk.—And they stoned Stephen invoking (or praying,²) and saying *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*." Paul addresses his first epistle to the Corinthians "to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place *call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord* ;" which implies that it was the practice of all who were Christians *to pray to Christ*.³ This same apostle declares that he thrice

¹ John 5 : 28, 29. ² Cor. 5 : 10.

² Gr. *ἐπικαλούμενον*, literally *calling upon*.

³ See Schleusner's Lexicon, article *ἐπικαλέω* † 5. So common was it among the early Christians to pay religious homage to Christ, that it was usual to distinguish them by this circumstance. Pliny, Governor of Bithyn-

besought the Lord, by whom he evidently means Christ, that the thorn in the flesh might be taken away; and received for answer, "my grace is sufficient for thee."¹ It may be added, that "to call upon the name of the Lord," is a phrase of frequent occurrence in the Old Testament, denoting prayer or religious invocation. Thus Abraham "builded an altar unto the Lord, and *called upon the name of the Lord.*"² In a still more explicit manner is Christ acknowledged to be the object of religious worship in the following passages. "*That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, OF THINGS IN HEAVEN, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.—And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts,³ and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory,*

ia, in a letter to the Emperor Trajan, says he had made inquiries concerning the Christians, and learned, "that they were accustomed on a stated day to meet before daylight and *to sing with one another a hymn to Christ as God.*" (Lib. X. Ep. 97.) Those who have not opportunity, to consult the original, may find a translation of the entire letter in Milner's Church History, vol. I. pp. 147—150.

¹ Phil. 4: 13. Rom. 10: 11. Acts 3: 6. 7: 59. 1 Cor. 1: 2. 2 Cor. 12: 8, 9.

² Gen. 12: 8.

³ Gr. ζῴων, often rendered "living ones," or "living creatures." See Doddridge's Note on Rev. 4: 6.

and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto HIM* who sitteth upon the throne, *AND unto the LAMB* forever and ever.”¹ What higher honours can creatures render to the supreme Jehovah, than are here paid by the intelligent universe to Christ? If to these honours we add the divine names, titles, attributes, and works which we have seen are so abundantly given him in the Scriptures, and which the Scriptures themselves represent as descriptive of the only true God, the truth of the proposition which we are considering, so far as it relates to the Son, must be not only convincing, but overwhelming.

I proceed now to show,

That the characteristics of true and proper Godhead are ascribed, also, in the Scriptures, to the Holy Spirit. No one, let his opinion of the doctrine of the Trinity be what it may, can well doubt that the phrase Holy Spirit, or as our translators usually have it, Holy Ghost, is frequently used in Scripture in such a manner as to denote something truly divine. Who, for example, can read such declarations as the following, and not perceive that the sacred writers connected with the phrase the idea of supreme divinity? “Peter said unto Ananias, why has Satan filled thine heart to lie unto the *Holy Ghost*? Thou

¹ Phil. 2 : 10, 11. Rev. 5 : 11—13.

hast not lied unto men, but unto *God*.—Wherefore the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart," &c.¹ In the passage referred to in the 95th Psalm, it is *Jehovah* who says "To day, if ye will hear," &c. The Scriptures are declared in one place to be given *by inspiration of God*; and in another it is said, that "holy men of God spake *as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*. All must admit that in cases like these the term denotes something in the proper sense divine. The only question is whether the Scriptures mean by it any thing *distinct from the Father*, or so distinct as to justify the separate application of the personal pronouns, and the ascription of divine actions and honours; which is what the doctrine of the Trinity asserts. On this point it would seem as if the Bible was as definite as it could be.

In the *first* place, there are many passages in which the Holy Spirit is spoken of in a personal manner. "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were *forbidden of the Holy Ghost* to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; but *the Spirit suffered them not*.—The Holy Ghost said, separate *me* Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto *I* have called them.—The Spirit said unto Peter, Behold three men seek thee. Arise therefore and get thee down, and go

¹ Acts 5: 3, 4. Heb. 3: 7.

with them doubting nothing, for *I* have sent them.—Howbeit when HE, the Spirit of truth is come, HE will guide you into all truth.”¹

In the *next* place, there are passages in which the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are distinguished from one another *in the same sentence*, and the personal pronouns applied to them severally. Such is the fact in the following declarations of our Saviour to his disciples.” *I* will pray the FATHER and HE shall give you another COMFORTER that HE may abide with you forever; even the SPIRIT of truth, WHOM the world cannot receive because it seeth HIM not, neither knoweth HIM; for HE dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.—The COMFORTER, which is the HOLY GHOST, WHOM the FATHER will send in MY name, HE shall teach you all things.”²

What can be more obvious than the import of such language? Here are no metaphorical allusions, no poetic images, to affect the meaning. All is simple, unimpassioned prose. If then there is any distinction between the Father, and the Son, there is no less distinction between them both, and the Holy Spirit. The second proposition is therefore proved to be true.

From the fact thus established, that divine prerogatives are ascribed in Scripture to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, it might natural-

¹ Acts 16: 6, 7. 13: 2. 10: 19, 20. John 16: 13. See also Acts 15: 28 &c.

² John 14: 16, 17, 26.

ly be expected that the sacred writers would sometimes exhibit them *conjointly*, and sometimes *interchangeably*; as performing separate acts, and as performing the same acts. Such is the fact.

Each of these Divine Names is introduced in a peculiar connexion in the following passages. “Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.—Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.—Praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.—The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all.—For through Him, i. e. Christ, we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”¹

The words *God*, and *Christ*, are used *interchangeably* in many instances like the following. “For we shall all stand before the *judgment seat of Christ*; for it is written, as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to *God*. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to *God*.” The resurrection of Christ is often ascribed to the power of God, and yet Christ declared that he would raise his own

¹ Matth. 28: 19. 1 Pet. 1: 2. Jude 20—21. 2 Cor. 13: 14. Eph. 2: 18.

body. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down OF MYSELF; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment (or commission) have I received of my Father." The same union of operation with the Father, is strongly implied in those passages which speak of the resurrection of mankind; which is sometimes ascribed to God and sometimes to Christ.¹

The Father and the Son are exhibited both *conjointly*, and *interchangeably* as the object of prayer, and the source of spiritual blessings in such instances as these. "Now *God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ*, direct our way unto you. —Now *our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father*, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and stablish you in every good word and work."² In other instances they are joined in the *same act of worship*. "Blessing and honour, and glory and power, be *unto HIM that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the LAMB forever*.—Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the LAMB."³ Whoever considers the import of such passages will surely not be surprised that

¹ Rom. 14: 10—12. 2 Cor. 1: 1. Compare John 10: 17, 18. 5: 28, 29. Compare Acts 26: 8.

² 1 Thess. 3: 11, 12. 2 Thess. 2: 16, 17.

³ Rev. 5: 13. 7: 10.

our Saviour himself should declare, that whatsoever things the Father doeth "*the same* doeth the Son likewise;" and on this ground should demand "that all men might honour the Son, *even as they honour the Father.*"¹

On the supposition that the doctrine of the Trinity is true, these passages admit of an easy interpretation. But if that be rejected, it is difficult to conceive what explanation can be given of them which is consistent with the exclusive rights of the Godhead. It would shock every mind to hear other names associated, as these are throughout the Scriptures, with the ever blessed Jehovah, who is infinitely jealous of his own honour, and has threatened with severe punishment all those who give his glory to another.

Besides, if the declarations which ascribe the attributes and honours of Godhead to the Son and the Holy Spirit, are not to be understood literally but figuratively, as has sometimes been said, how is it to be accounted for, that the sacred writers have nowhere used the same figurative style when speaking of those who are confessedly inferior to God? Why is it used only in reference to the Son and the Holy Spirit? The examples in which the word *god* is applied to idols, and in two or three instances to men, are so different both in the form of expression,

¹ John 5 : 19, 23.

and in their connexion, that they cannot be considered as at all analogous. Let the style which the Scriptures use in their descriptions of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, be taken *as a whole*, and it is hazarding nothing to say, that it is without a parallel in the Bible. Whence this great, this wonderful singularity? Either the sacred writers are chargeable with an anomaly which cannot be reconciled with any just principles of interpretation, and the tendency of which is to unsettle the mind concerning their meaning in other places; or, the language in which they ascribe divine attributes and honours to the Son and to the Spirit, as well as to the Father, must be received according to its plain import, and the doctrine as it has been stated in this discourse be allowed to be sustained.

I have now endeavoured to establish two propositions.

FIRST. *The Scriptures mention certain characteristics by which God is known and distinguished from all other beings; and which he does not permit to be applied to any other than himself.*

SECOND. *These same characteristics which belong only to God, and are forbidden by him to be applied to any other, are ascribed in Scripture, by God himself, to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.*

The following inference is unavoidable.

THIRD. *That the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are the one only living and true God; and that there*

is in the Divine Nature, or Godhead, a foundation for such a distinction as authorizes the separate application of the personal pronouns, I, thou, he, to each of these names, and requires divine attributes and honours to be distinctly ascribed to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as well as to the Father.

This is the doctrine of the Trinity which it was proposed to establish. If the premises are true, the conclusion can never be shaken. Before this can be done, it must be shown either, that the testimony of Scripture is unworthy of confidence ; in other words, that the Bible is not the word of God ; or, that interpreted according to the acknowledged principles of language it does not ascribe divine attributes and honours to the Son and to the Spirit, as well as to the Father. The first will not be attempted till the days of avowed infidelity shall have returned ; and the last cannot be done, it is believed, while the Scriptures remain what they now are, and the meaning of words is the same. The truth of the doctrine which we are considering, may be regarded, therefore, as resting upon an immoveable foundation. So long as there is any truth in the axiom, that *things which are equal to the same, are equal to one another*, so long may it be demonstrably shown from the inspired records, that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are *equally divine*, and consequently that the statement contained in this discourse is true.

Here we might close the argument, and proceed to discuss the practical importance of the doctrine of the Trinity. But lest it should be supposed, that the conclusion to which we have come has been drawn without reference to the objections which are alleged by those who reject the doctrine, I will notice some of the principal of them, and examine how far they appear to rest upon a solid foundation.

The objection, that the doctrine is absurd *in itself*, being of the nature of a previous question, which must be settled before any direct testimony can be received, has been already considered, and, it is believed, shewn to be groundless so far as the statement in the present discourse is concerned.

It is also objected, that there are many passages of Scripture in which Christ is represented as *inferior* to the Father; and that these are inconsistent with his Supreme Divinity.

The passages to which reference is made are such as the following. “My Father is greater than I.—The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do.—The Father loveth the Son and hath *given* all things into his hand.—All power is *given* unto me in heaven and in earth.—For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the *man* Christ Jesus.—God, who created all things *by* Jesus Christ.—The Father judgeth no man, but hath *committed* all judgment to the Son.—Of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels

which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.—Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father; and when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”¹

It will not be doubted that these quotations exhibit the difficulty to which the objection refers, in as strong a light as any in the New Testament. They have been selected with this design. In what way then are these passages to be reconciled with those which ascribe divine attributes to Christ?

In answer to this inquiry it is to be observed, that the Scriptures represent Christ as possessing an *original* and an *assumed* character. In the first place they assert that he existed and acted long before he appeared on earth. “Jesus said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you, *before Abraham was I am*.—And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, *with the glory which I had with thee before the world was*.” We are told also that Christ in his pre-existent state was Divine. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” In the next place the Scriptures describe a great and wonderful change as having taken place in the condition of Christ. The evangel-

¹ John 14: 28. 5: 19. 3: 35. Math. 28: 18. Eph. 3: 9. 5: 22. 1 Tim. 2: 5. Mark 13: 32. 1 Cor. 15: 24, 28.

ist John declares that the “*Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.*” Paul says, “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, *God was manifest in the flesh.*”—Other passages are more minute in the account which they give of this change. But no where is it more strongly avowed, or more fully exhibited, than in the following passage ; “Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God ; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”¹

Who does not perceive in these passages a two-fold description of the person of Christ, in which he is represented as possessing an *original* and an *assumed* character. But let this distinction be made, and the difficulty which has been referred to, ceases to exist. In his *original* character Christ is Divine, and is therefore represented as equal with the Father, in the numerous passages which have been brought to prove his Divinity. But in his *assumed* character he is man and Mediator, and is accordingly represented in other places as limited in knowledge and power, and as acting in subordination to the will of the Father. As a man he is, and must be, inferior

¹ John 1: 14. 1 Tim. 3: 16. Phil. 2: 6, 7. On this last passage see Stuart's Letters to Channing.

to the Father in every thing which distinguishes the human from the Divine nature ; and he can have no knowledge of future events, and of course can have none of the day of judgment, any farther than it is revealed to him. To suppose that he can, would be to suppose either that human nature does not properly belong to him, or that a finite mind can, of itself, discern what is obvious only to the eye of omniscience ; neither of which is true.¹ In like manner Christ, in his complex character of *God and man*, is invested by the Father with the office of Mediator, and is said to receive from him, a kingdom, and authority to govern the universe. It is in this character also that he is commissioned to execute the work of redemption, to make atonement for sin, and to judge the world at the last day. All is done in subordination to the will of the Father ; and when he shall have answered the ends for which this commission was given him, he will resign it, and

1 " We readily avow that we pretend not to know in what manner the divine and human natures, which we attribute to the Messiah, are united in his sacred person. We believe that in this respect especially ' his name is WONDERFUL,' and that ' no one knoweth the Son but the Father.' The Scriptures appear to us, on the one hand, to teach the existence of such a union as produces a personal oneness ; and, on the other, to exclude the notion of transmutation or confusion of the essential properties of either nature with respect to the other. It follows, that whatever communication of supernatural qualities, powers, or enjoyments, was made by the indwelling Divinity to ' the man Christ Jesus,' it was made in various degrees, and on successive occasions, as the Divine Wisdom judged fit : and this necessary limitation would apply to ' times and seasons,' which the Father has put in his own power, as well as to any other conceivable class of objects."—*Scripture Testimony to the Messiah*, by John Pyle Smith, D. D. vol. II. p. 340. London, 1821.

with it, the kingdom which he has received, that God may be all in all. In this manner the various classes of passages, which speak of our Saviour's person and attributes, may be easily reconciled, and in no other way can they be. If Christ be not truly and properly Divine, no consistent explanation can be given of those passages which represent him as equal to the Father. If he be not also man and Mediator, none can be given of those which speak of his subordination to the Father. But if both characters are allowed to be united in one complex person, all the passages harmonize with each other. Nor is the supposition of two natures in Christ, any more inadmissible, than the supposition of two natures in man. If the attributes of animal and spiritual existence may be combined so as to form one person, who will say that it is beyond the reach of almighty power to combine human and divine attributes in the person of Jesus Christ? We speak of man as being mortal and immortal; yet no one mistakes our meaning; because when we speak of man as *mortal*, every one understands us to refer to his *corporeal* nature; and when we speak of him as *immortal*, to his *spiritual* nature. Nor need the sacred writers be misapprehended, when they attribute two natures to Christ, and speak of him sometimes in reference to one, and sometimes in reference to the other.

Still it may be asked, if Christ is himself God,

how can God be said to have created the world *by* Christ? To this it may be answered, that it has already been shown, that the distinction between the Father, Son, and Spirit, though not inconsistent with the Divine Unity, is nevertheless a *real* distinction, and such as lays the foundation for a *relation* of some kind between them. This relation, if expressed at all, must be expressed in the language of men. But it is manifest that all such language is inadequate to describe the precise nature of that relation ; and consequently must be regarded as the language of approximation merely. The apostle John, as we have seen, says concerning Christ, "In the beginning was the Word (*Λόγος Logos*), and the Word was WITH God, and the Word WAS God. The same was in the beginning WITH God." Suppose now that this phraseology should be understood *literally*, might not the objector ask with the same propriety, if the Word was himself God, how could he be represented as being *with* God? Every one must see that while a distinction of some kind is indicated by this language, the terms which express it are used in a peculiar and qualified sense.

In like manner, when it is said that God created the world *by* Christ, the words are to be understood as referring to that DISTINCTION which exists in the Divine Nature, between the Father and the Son ; and which, whether it consist in the order of opera-

tion, or in something else, renders it proper to ascribe the work of creation to the Divine Word or Logos, in a *special* sense. In accordance with this view of the subject is the representation of the evangelist John in the place referred to. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things (i. e. the universe¹) were made BY HIM; and WITHOUT HIM was not any thing made which was made. The world was made BY HIM. And the Word (*Logos*) was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld HIS glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the FATHER, full of grace and truth." Two things are here manifest: the writer distinguishes between the Father and the Word or Logos; and he ascribes creation directly to the latter—that is, he ascribes it to God, *as the Logos*. It is doubtless with reference to the same distinction, that God is said to create the world BY the Logos or Christ.

Let the remarks which have now been offered be attentively considered, and it will be seen that the doctrine of the Trinity, instead of being open to the objection which has been discussed, is the only system which effectually obviates that objection, since it is the only one which corresponds with the entire representation of the Scriptures themselves.

¹ Gr. τὰ πάντα. For this use of the phrase, see Wahl's Lex. by Robinson, Art. ὁ, ἡ, τό II. A. 2. a. δ.

The use of the word "person" as applied to the Trinity has given rise to an objection of another kind. It has seemed to those who make the objection, to imply the existence of three distinct Gods; as when applied to men it denotes a separate, conscious being. But it should be remembered that the meaning of this, like that of every other word, is entirely arbitrary. It may signify more or less, according to the design of those who use it. As applied to the Trinity, it denotes simply, *that* in the Divine Nature, be it what it may, which lays the foundation for ascribing the characteristics of the true God to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, and for applying to each the personal pronouns, I, thou, and he. For this purpose, it is perhaps as convenient a word as any other. Still it is not a term of Scripture, and may be used or not, according to each one's views of its propriety. All that is necessary is, that some word or phrase be adopted to express the distinction which has been mentioned, and that when "person" is thus used, it be clearly understood, that it is employed not in an ordinary, but in a special and qualified sense. Notwithstanding, to show that the doctrine is independent of this word, and may be discussed without it, it is not used in the present discourse.

Should it after all be objected, that the subject is mysterious, and therefore not to be believed; it is admitted that so far as the *explanation* of the fact

which it teaches is concerned, it is above the comprehension of human minds. We acknowledge that what we have to present on this subject is not theory, but fact; not explanation, but evidence. Is it however rational, is it safe, to reject a fact which is supported by good evidence, merely because we cannot explain it? If so, then there are many facts relating to the character and government of God, which may be disbelieved, though God himself has testified to the truth of them. Nor may we stop here. The natural world presents innumerable phenomena, which no human intellect can explain, and which, therefore, we may disbelieve, though we have the testimony of our senses to their reality. A principle which leads to such conclusions can have no claim to confidence; and no objection founded upon it is worthy of a serious and enlightened mind. The only question to be decided is, Do the Scriptures, interpreted according to the established principles of language, teach that there is in the Divine Nature such a distinction as has been mentioned? If they do, there is no alternative but to admit the fact, or to deny that the Bible is the word of God.

I am aware how common it is to plead the simplicity of other views of the Divine Nature, as a reason for rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity. But let us not be deceived. There is a simplicity which is not of the Gospel. No religion is more simple, none more opposed to every thing like mystery.

than Deism. Yet Deism is not the religion of the Gospel. It was not thus that Paul reasoned on this most profound of subjects. Neither the unbelief of the Jew, nor the learning and philosophy of the Greek, could prevent him from saying wherever he went, "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; *God was manifest in the flesh.*" To follow such an example cannot but be safe. It is at least wise.

But there need be no difficulty in comprehending this doctrine, so far as correct views are necessary to correct practice. We have only to remember the offices which are sustained, or the works which are performed, by the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, to acknowledge them in those offices and works, and to pay them the honours which are due to their divine character. No matter how illiterate a man may be, he can understand the FACT, that we have access to the Father, through the mediation of the Son, and by the aid of the Spirit; and this is the substance of the doctrine of the Trinity, considered in its relations to our duty and happiness. Christians may adopt whatever methods of explanation and illustrations they please; these should never be made the standard of a Scriptural faith. The great and visible bond of their union should consist in acknowledging the *fact*, that supreme and divine honours are due to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, and in a correspondent practice.

III. It remains to point out the practical importance of the doctrine which has been discussed.

Were it not that the subject is one of great practical interest, it is difficult to conceive why it should occupy so prominent a place in the Scriptures. The design of revelation is not to amuse men with curious speculations, but to teach them their duty. It might therefore be inferred from the fact, that so much is said concerning the divine character of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, that the doctrine of the Trinity which teaches their union in the Divine Nature is of fundamental importance. A few considerations, which is all that the limits of the discourse admit, will show that such is its real character.

In the *first* place, it is essentially connected with the question of religious worship. If there be a subject of deep and solemn moment, it is this. There can be but one lawful object of religious worship, because there is but one only living and true God. He who worships any other being, or who does not worship God according to his *true* character, is an idolater, and must answer for an offence which is every where represented in the Scriptures as one of great criminality. If then it be important that we know to whom our religious homage is due; if we would avoid the sin of idolatry and not worship an imaginary Deity, it is our duty to believe the doctrine of the Trinity and conform our practice to it;

since any other God than that which it describes, is not the God of the Scriptures.

There can be no middle path here. Either there is great error and sin in receiving the doctrine of the Trinity; or there is great error and sin in rejecting it. The subject renders every thing like compromise impossible. Every one will indeed judge for himself, and to his own master will stand or fall. But it is plain, that those who adopt and those who reject the views which it gives of the Supreme Being, possess different and opposite religions, and so far as relates to this point, can have no concord either in their faith or worship.

In the *second* place, the importance of the doctrine will appear yet more manifest, if we consider the necessary connexion which it holds with other truths and facts revealed in the Scriptures. To select but a single point for illustration. How different must be the views which men form of the mediation of Christ, particularly of the greatness and moral value of those sacrifices which he made for the salvation of men, of his all sufficiency to save, and of his intercession, according as they believe or reject the doctrine of his real and proper Divinity? How is it possible to attach the same moral dignity to the actions and sufferings of one who is merely created or human, as of one who is also Divine? Who therefore will say, that the moral influence exerted by Jesus Christ is not most deeply affected by

the manner in which this great article of our faith is determined? It is not too much to say, that this single circumstance makes an infinite difference in the character of him, whom we are to acknowledge as our Saviour, and that it may lay a foundation for an infinite difference in the method by which we apprehend that our salvation is to be accomplished. Particularly is it true, that whatever views affect the dignity of Christ's person, affect in the same degree his qualifications to make an atonement for sin; and the nearly universal rejection of this last doctrine, by those who reject the Divinity of Christ, proves that they are likely to stand or fall together.

I might mention other topics, which are intimately connected with the subject of this discourse, and show how strongly they influence both our feelings and conduct; I might dwell, in particular, on the effect which it must have on our devotions, and especially on our addresses to Christ, to regard him as possessed of infinite perfections; but what has been said is sufficient to show the great importance of the doctrine which has been discussed, as an article of faith.

I add *thirdly*, that it is no less deeply connected with our hopes as immortal beings. If the worship of the only true God has any thing to do with our present character, or our future prospects; if it can have any influence on the question of our acceptance with God, whether we trust in Christ as the

great atoning sacrifice for sinners, or rely upon some other ground for pardon and eternal life; then is the doctrine of the Trinity at the foundation of our hopes as immortal beings. Nor should it be forgotten, that if we refuse this way of salvation which God has provided through his Son, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." There is but one Saviour, and one way of salvation. If we mistake here, our error is, or may be, fatal. In like manner, if we renounce the Holy Spirit, we have no other Sanctifier, Comforter, nor Guide. We reject the appointed and only efficient agent of regeneration, of progressive holiness, and of inward and spiritual blessedness. Of such importance is the doctrine which has been considered. All that is most material to our worship, to our faith, and to our hopes, is involved in it.

In view of the evidence which has been presented in support of this great article of revealed religion, we may learn, my brethren, how little it has to fear from the spirit of deep and earnest investigation, which the present age has awakened. If there be a sentiment of the Bible which invites inquiry on the ground of evidence, it is the doctrine of the Trinity. It is built on no preconceived opinions of the mode of the divine existence. It is derived purely from testimony. If the Scriptures are divinely inspired, the declarations which they contain

may be regarded as ultimate facts, having the same relation to moral, which the phenomena of nature have to physical, science. The doctrine of the Trinity being shown to be a fair inference from these declarations, can therefore no more be shaken by investigation, than the theory of Newton concerning the visible universe.

What strong ground of hope and consolation have they who have made this God their refuge! An everlasting Father and Friend; an infinite Saviour, and an almighty Sanctifier, united in accomplishing their salvation, and engaged to make them completely and forever blessed. What a guarantee of ultimate safety and happiness is this; and how is it possible to contemplate it, but with wonder and joy!

Who then can estimate the consequences of rejecting a doctrine, supported by such evidence, and involving such interests? Are any of you, my hearers, tempted to do this? Consider whether your doubts arise from having carefully and thoroughly studied the Scriptures, accompanied with frequent and earnest prayer to God for divine teaching; or, whether it be not for some other reasons, which will be less satisfactory to you in the day of final account. The responsibility which is assumed by such a rejection, may well awaken the deepest solicitude. Expunge the evidence which the Bible furnishes of the truth of the doctrine, and you blot out the

light of revelation, and cover its pages with chaotic darkness. Shut out the trembling, anxious sinner from that divine refuge which is here provided for him, and you bid him trust in an arm of flesh, though the curse of heaven is denounced against the man who does it. But this is not all. You hush the still, small voice of that Spirit, which speaks to his soul and convinces him of sin. No breath of spiritual life passes through the valley of death ; and no Star of Bethlehem arises to guide the inquiring mind to Jesus.

Soon the veil which now hides these invisible glories will be removed ; and then all who are permitted to enter into heaven, will doubtless, with one heart and voice, ascribe “ blessing and honour, and glory and power, unto HIM who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the LAMB.” Then will it be known, by blissful experience, what it is to enjoy “ the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost,” for ever and ever.

1870
The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been elected to the office of Justice of the Peace for the year 1870.

Wm. H. Smith, John A. Jones, J. B. Brown, J. C. White, J. D. Green, J. E. Black, J. F. Grey, J. G. White, J. H. Black, J. I. Grey.

Wm. H. Smith, John A. Jones, J. B. Brown, J. C. White, J. D. Green, J. E. Black, J. F. Grey, J. G. White, J. H. Black, J. I. Grey.

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Wm. H. Smith, John A. Jones, J. B. Brown, J. C. White, J. D. Green, J. E. Black, J. F. Grey, J. G. White, J. H. Black, J. I. Grey.

"GOD, THE ETERNAL SUPPORT."

Underneath are the Everlasting Arms.—Deut. 33: 27.

S E R M O N

BY

C. D. BRADLEE,

PASTOR OF THE

CHURCH AT HARRISON SQUARE, BOSTON, MASS.

PREACHED

SEPT. 5, 1886,

ON THE FIRST SUNDAY SERVICE AFTER THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE, AND AFTER
THE DEATH OF NATHANIEL CLEGG, AND SEWELL E. FAUNCE.

NOTE.—*Young Faunce was instantly killed at Tuckerman's Ravine, Saturday, July 24, 1886.

BOSTON:

PRESS OF GEO. E. TODD & CO., HARRISON SQUARE.

1886.

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S E R M O N .

UNDERNEATH ARE THE EVERLASTING ARMS.—Deut. 33: 27.

I HARDLY know what any of us would do, were it not for the fact that “underneath are the everlasting arms,” for in cases of doubt, distress, danger, extreme want, heavy sickness and seeming death, what *human* arm would suffice to hold us up? And is not the discipline of each one of us, whilst we dwell upon the earth, extremely varied, so that no one can pass through life without surprise, trouble, shame, and defeat? Of course I know that there are times in the history of all of us, when the everlasting arms hardly seem to be needed, or craved, or allowed; when human strength appears to be enough, native wit sufficient, one’s own right arm all conquering, and the human will, and work, and success, are called all in all; when victory comes with hardly an effort; prizes seem to be wrenched from time; and the days are slaves to the magician’s wand, that seems to

be made and used by one's own desire ; when wealth, friends, prosperity, power, and everything materially good, seem to be mortgaged to the possessor at a huge interest against the power of a foreclosure ; when God is sometimes forgotten, heaven ignored, self alone worshipped, and a philosophy woven out of one's own brain is the object of adoration, approval, and boast. Well, *even then*, in this hour of assumed personal ability, I declare on the ground of philosophy alone, that "underneath are the everlasting arms," that is, unless when prosperous we rise up and say that we are self-created ; that we have existed from all eternity ; and that we have an everlasting earthly inheritance !

So that, just here, where we find denial of God, self-sufficiency, and human autocracy, I claim that just as long as there is mortality, there must be a power behind the throne, although unconfessed, and profaned, and set aside. But there comes a day when "all is not gold that glitters ;" when the power of the material becomes crippled ; when riches take wings and fly away ; or health becomes muffled, or broken ; or strength departs ; or utter prostration appears ; or seeming death is at hand : and thus, I say, at such times we all become insufficient, and empty, and wretched, and cry out for the arms that are underneath, that have always been holding us up, that have never been withdrawn, although so constantly ignored.

It is sometimes one of the strongest evidences of the living God when some proud spirit, some man of immense wealth, who has for years defied heaven and earth, who has seemed to trample upon human rights all the time ;

who has used the world as a sponge uses water, to gather up all that can be held ; who has become a huge receiver, but never a giver, finds some day the material wrecked, and that which seemed everlasting, but a vapor, and loses all that was called a support ; when such an one, a Cræsus so long, but thoroughly bereft at last, calls upon a God that never before was named, and wants, in the crushing experience, "the everlasting arms." We may say, in our surprise, why did not that proud spirit find out, in the days of such great bounty, the holy Giver of splendid gifts, and *then* make the life a glory, a peace, and a sacred power ? and why did such an one wait till the days of darkness before finding the true light ? and yet let us be glad, even at the eleventh hour, the soul cried out, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

But how much nobler the character that, whether in prosperity or in adversity, never forgets the everlasting support ; that uses wealth, power, position, and influence, all as gifts, loans, and trusts, holding the same as a steward, and dispensing the same, like the gentle rain of heaven for no mere personal benefit ; and ready when the call comes, without a protest, to render back the trust, and knowing, even in emptiness, that "underneath are the everlasting arms." How with this faith, one seemingly bereft of all, yet possesses all, and stands upon a rock that can never be undermined. If sickness should come, there is no rebellion ; or pain, there is no distrust of the Almighty ; or if seeming death is at hand, still the face and heart are bright, and the splendors of celestial lights glorify the soul, so that the

house, the chamber, and the bed, are found to be places of worship, and the music of the heavenly choir can be perpetually heard.

“Underneath are the everlasting arms.” These words seem to light up the past, the present and the future. All history is a splendid testimony to the perpetual guardianship of a never-sleeping Providence. Take the centuries in parts, like stones in a mosaic, and events will seem tangled, rough, unsuggestive and useless, having but little marks of a superintending wisdom, devoid entirely of beauty, or order, or power, and we frequently must exclaim why this? why that? where was God at the time? But put the centuries together, read them together, see how each stone fits into the other stone, and all the stones combined make an impressive picture, speaking of a glorious artist, and at once, our hallelujahs rise up to the great King of kings.

Year by year, little seems to be done, and much seems to be undone, and events dance forward and back, as if driven by relentless chance, and even take each hundred years alone, and we are puzzled by the record, but put eighteen centuries together, then all the inhabitants of the earth and heaven must perforce sing aloud, “Glory be to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, now and forever.” So now, when we are puzzled, this very day, when events seem to be tangled; when skepticism and socialism, and materialism, seem to have the upper hand; when we sometimes feel that the guiding love of God is withdrawn, and that chaos will overwhelm us; when autocratic Russia stands dazed, and pleasure-loving France is stupefied, and philosophical Germany is in doubt, and intellec-

tual England is distressed, and liberty-loving America is bewildered : *even now*, if we will, we can find underneath the disturbance the Everlasting Arms, and nothing can really withstand the control of the Almighty.

So for the future, we need not be afraid, for God still lives, will never die, from everlasting to everlasting will still be God, and He will put all the rough stones together and polish them, and make a mosaic that will be the wonder of all eternity, and we cannot outvote the blessed King of kings. If it were not for this great truth as I looked towards the future, I should become almost overpowered by my despair, as I see day by day, and ever increasing, the insolence of the rich, the tyranny of the poor, the self sufficiency of the unbeliever, the selfishness of humanity, and the fatal blows so constantly given to honor, integrity and holiness. And as we thus behold the power of sin growing, we feel like saying with Bishop Heber :

“ From foes that would the land devour,
From guilty pride and lust of power,
From wild sedition's lawless hour,
From yoke of slavery ;
From blinded zeal by faction led,
From giddy change by fancy bred,
From poisonous error's serpent head,
Good Lord, preserve us free.”

And then we say with Zihn :

“ God liveth ever,
Wherefore soul, despair thou never,
Our God is good, in every place
His love is known, His help is found,
His mighty arm and tender grace
Bring good from ills that hem us round.
Easier than we think can He
Turn to joy our agony,
Soul, remember mid thy pains,
God, o'er all, forever reigns.”

“Underneath are the everlasting arms.” But suppose that this statement should not be true ; suppose there should be no God, and no everlasting arms, and no support ; and that we are all balanced on a straw over a precipice, into which we shall soon plunge, and at the depths find everlasting destruction ! What then ? Why then, all our instincts are a mistake ; then all life is a series of contradictions, we are made, and not made, at the same time, and chance, with no consciousness, for with consciousness allowed chance would only be another name for God, *chance, with no consciousness*, has from the very depths of a past eternity, created a world with billions and billions of inhabitants who could think, and speak, and dream of heaven, and believe in a God, and thus be greater than chance itself.

Now which alternative shall we take ? Shall we have underneath the everlasting arms forever and ever, in time and in eternity ? or shall we say that a senseless power created beings greater than itself, and then after giving them the ability to scale heaven with their thought, consigned them at last to eternal oblivion ?

Choose each and all.

“Underneath are the everlasting arms.” These words seem to me especially befitting as we gather together in our church after a long rest, and take up our work again refreshed, strengthened, consecrated and convinced, perhaps more sure than ever before, that underneath are the everlasting arms. For many weeks, in my mental vision, I have been way into the depths of the mountains ; huge rocks have been on my side, a deep ravine close by, an arch, with tons of

snow, hanging with wondrous beauty close at hand, and five dear ones, who have worshipped in this church, have seemed to gaze at the glorious works of God. What joy for the eye ; what a peace for the heart, what a sacred lesson for the memory, what a foretaste of heaven ! But soon four of the number leave the spot where the glory was the greatest, and but one stands in his youthful beauty, his noble courage, his cheerful faith, stands with kindling eye, and throbbing heart, and eloquent voice, when all at once the chariot of the Lord comes and wraps in a mantle of white that young man, and he is translated from the earthly mountains to the mountains of God in heaven, and those, but a few minutes before at the very spot where he was taken, gaze like the prophet of old, at the ascending angel, and although they cannot see his form, know that underneath are the everlasting arms—underneath him, underneath them, underneath us all, promoting him; and sparing them awhile, but in God's good time, if we are faithful, lifting us all up to the city of the New Jerusalem.

I will not dwell longer upon that scene which must dwell with some of you as long as you breathe the breath of life. I will not speak more of my vision, *which to some of you was such a terrible reality*, but I will earnestly try to assure you, and myself, and all the earth, that “underneath are the everlasting arms ;” underneath the aged one so patient in his sickness, so grateful to the dear ones who cared for him so gently, and so ready to go if God ordered ; over whose form I offered the prayer for help on the last Sunday we met in this church ; underneath the boy who was just

beginning to be a man, as he was suddenly caught up to heaven; underneath his companions who were spared awhile to dwell with us; and underneath the world, and all the inhabitants thereof. Yes, forever and forever are everlasting arms of God holding us up, for he has given his glorious promise through the words of the blessed Redeemer: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Yet, after all that we have said, we have just within a few days, through a large portion of the United States, passed through an experience that might seem to set aside forever the comforting doctrine that "underneath are the everlasting arms." Indeed to many it must have seemed that all eternal support had been withdrawn, and that everything solid had disappeared, as the earth began to shake, and buildings commenced to fall, and fire offered its too friendly fellowship, and multitudes of people were filled with alarm, and prostrated in prayer, whilst hearts were broken, and many souls went suddenly out of their earthly tenement! Where, then, were the "Everlasting Arms?" Did the people of Charleston, and Cleveland, and Washington, and Savannah, and other cities, find God at their side when everything else seemed to be slipping away? Yes; then, closer than ever were the "Everlasting Arms" around every mortal body and every anguished soul, and many who never prayed before, bore powerful testimony to this great truth when they cried out, "God have mercy upon us," and uttered other piteous appeals to the great King of kings, because then there was a clear confession that God was

near, and that God alone could help ; and just as long as we all have such a support, earthquakes cannot destroy us ; fire cannot burn us up ; tidal waves cannot submerge us ; and no earthly power can put us down, or put us out, for the spiritual body can never be destroyed, and the heart that rests on God can never be broken !



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